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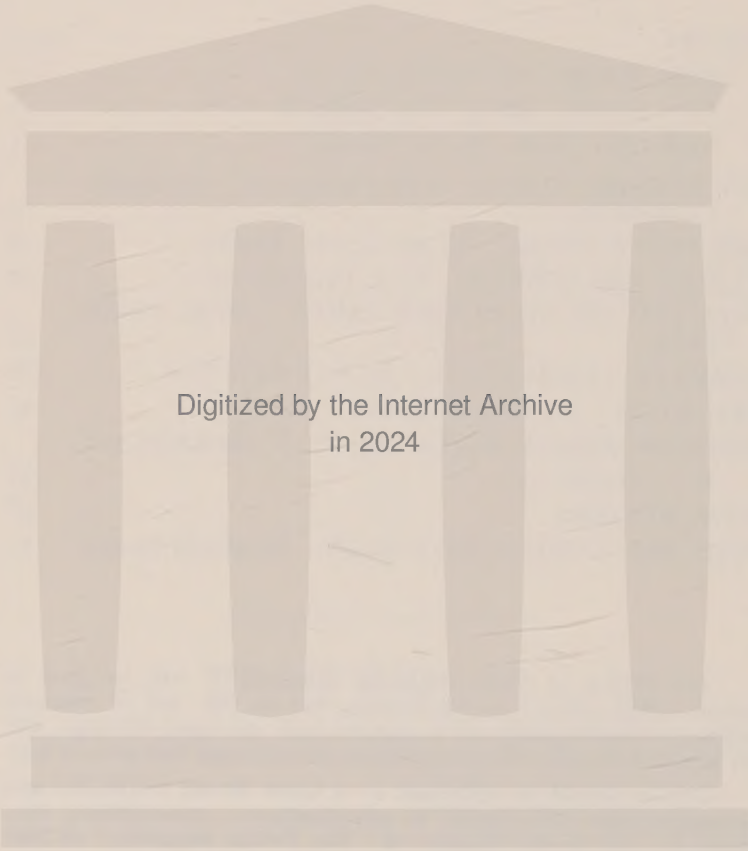
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THE DUBLIN MAGAZINE

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JANUARY—MARCH, 1949.

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Two Poems by Padraic Colum

STOCKS OR PINKS OR GILLYFLOWERS

And if we look at them we say,
"Those long-stalked, always-opened flowers—
Unsurely do we know their name!
Pale as the wimple of a nun,
Or pink as in an order changed,
These Stocks or Pinks or Gillyflowers."

But when benighted are the rest,
These flowers are still awake: their bloom
Becomes the shine that night allows,
With frugal fragrance; then we say
"Serene as in one's inmost thought,
These Stocks or Pinks or Gillyflowers."

IRISES

Where are they now, the softly blooming flowers
With name unhard, unbarred—the Irises?
Their stalks are shears stuck in the hardened ground.
We named their colors, but our sights could measure
Never their colors, depths—where are they now
With argent, azure, purple and pale gold
And color doubled like two stains in glass—
The light-plumed Irises, where are they now?

He has played or basked in the sunlight
in his youth and since
loves the moon upon the fields
the meadows and the stream which from the hills flows with many
a chasmal pool,

he loves the ancient otter-ways
from reach to reach which cut the river-bends
amid the grassy blackthorn thickets and the bramble thicks
or, nearer stream, the iris beds floored with matted rhizome
where the cloud-soft meadowsweet flings fragrance on the breeze

he takes to the water as to a realm in fee
he turns expertly in the pools to seize his prey
and works the longer reaches for the heavier take—
he tears the salmon from the shoulder down
engluts the fresh warm flesh—
not cruel, but with relentless appetite and clean celerity
until his hunger is appeased—

his ruder instincts, more relentless ways and habitude
display his courage and many noble qualities,
and mingle with his gentle ways of love—
otter-integrity of being—

To Sylvia

A blue abyss in mountains is a delightful thing
and when the staunch green verdure of ripe Summer woods
oak and larch grown
is flung across the vale

where naked hills unfold to view a Doric spaciousness
 then, richness and depth together well agree
 contending which of them shall give most majesty
 this to the bleak hill-land or that to the luxurious wood—
 till a sudden pallor of brownness
 lifting its palely feathered feet as it glides into flight
 the salmon-brown hawk
 screams in moth-winged flight to a tree
 and then with pure, broad strokes, planing,
 circles above the wood—
 what more could rejoice the heart
 than such royal solitude
 wert thou but here beside me
 to joy in it with me—

July 10, 1945.

THE OLD FILM

“FOR THEE, O DEAR, DEAR COUNTRY”

By H. Connell

Who were those who died piling up rocks for Dun Aengus?
 Free men labouring as beasts to baffle the Fomor,
 Labouring out of measure through spume-brandishing gales,
 How many staggered to death giddily over the cliff-tops?

That tragic multitude whose roll was called at Moytura,
 Offered the land their blood in pledge for freedom.
 They might have shared it as serfs, but death seemed better,
 They knew their courage vain against the enemy's science.

The Herd-boy came piping and men of cunning and wisdom
 Became fools and slaves, labouring on windier cliff-tops;
 Made war on themselves, on behalf of another country;
 (Spires ennobling the plains now pay tribute to them.)

Here now is my crux—am I speaking for Cas or Tola ?

Pagan forebear, or humble friend of avenging angels.
Age-old quandary of those to whom their land is heaven,
The soil undoubtedly sacred, land and sky interchanging.

Bid some mountain child " Look up and see Heaven above you ! "

Looking up he will know the rainbow-peak of Carntuohil.
The Clare youngster looks down over the gunwhale for devils
And gazes instead at a shining underwave city.

So Tola's eye may sometimes be out of focus.

Hills not so delectable beckon him in derision—
Then out of distress, confusion and deadly weakness,
Cas, relegated—comes and takes back the reins.

Leaving his domain amongst the pub-politicians

Foreninst he ran off the old reel of Martyrs before me.
Like that child of fate spell-bound on his tower in Desmond
I watched night-long ; my due for citizenship.

I saw captives lie in anguish the mind recoils from,
Exiles, panache masking the mutilation of spirit ;
Convicts cursing the sun, degenerate, stupefied, brutal ;
Multitudes stubbornly starving on their own gutted thresholds.

'Ninety-eight—'forty-eight, still the reel ticks over.

Brugha, O'Higgins—O malign unrelenting perverseness !
A long bitter draught, and the dregs were bitterest—
Hand back the reins now, pagan, and may your cairn content
you.

Come, cynic, take your shears, cut from the Reel of Patriots,
All crafty time-servers, well caught on the wrong foot,
All vain violent men, pestilent trouble-mongers,
All helpless victims, ninety-nine in a hundred.

Teach us to forget, to jettison Dalcais history,

Still a core remains it is right we should remember—
Take care lest having cast out all sentimental lumber,
Seven more worthless things creep in and steal our devotion.

July '47.

ONE EVENING GLEAM

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By George Fitzmaurice

PERSONS :

MRS. AGNES CLEARY.

JIM, her son, a blind man.

MRS. NANCY HANNIGAN.

PHOEBE TOLLEMACHE, a parson's daughter.

Scene—Mrs. Cleary's apartment in a tenement house in Great Longford Street Dublin. Fireplace at middle back. At each side of fire-place, a chair. Door at right. To right of door a bed in which the blind man is sleeping. At rise of curtain Mrs. Cleary is seen tucking bed-clothes. Enter, casually Mrs. Nancy Hannigan.

MRS. HANNIGAN : No change in him yet or is there ?

MRS. CLEARY : No change at all. It's the same way with him for the last three days, sleeping, sleeping. He wakes up for a bit in the morning, he wakes up for a bit at noon and again about seven o'clock in the evening. The young doctor is only just gone. He thinks it is only some little nervous fit he's got and that he'll be all right again in a few days time. He'll come to have another look at him to-morrow morning.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*seating herself on chair at left side of fire-place*) : It was only a false alarm you had then about his getting that little glimmer of the eyesight ?

MRS. CLEARY (*goes and sits on chair at right*) : I'd say now 'twas only some twitching about the eyes he got.

MRS. HANNIGAN : I got a fright when you mentioned it to me the first day, though I was thinking after that maybe that old Agyptian doctor you took him to twenty years ago was only talking through his hat when he said that your son would die within the hour if he ever recovered his eyesight.

MRS. CLEARY : The doctor only gave a horse-laugh when I told him what the Agyptian doctor said, " All quackery " that's the way he put it, though I pointed out to him that Jim's case was different from that of other blind people who would become a bit contented after a time even those that go blind late in life, and though Jim is blind since he was five years of age and he is forty now he never had

but one thought in his head, namely, to be able to see again. 'Twouldn't do, 'twas all quackery about that Aygyptian that's what the young doctor said.

MRS. HANNIGAN: I 'spect he's right. After all what speciality could them Aygyptians have but going on with their codology.

MRS. CLEARY (*looking towards bed*): He's as quiet as anything now anyway, no trouble on him and as healthy-looking as ever he was.

MRS. HANNIGAN: He'll be all right so with the help of God; it might be only some little fit he got from the changes in the weather.

MRS. CLEARY: That's what it might be then.

MRS. HANNIGAN: If the parson's daughter popped in now what an eye she would give me. She thinks I'm a perfect nuisance. I know what she would say—she'd say that woman Nancy Hannigan has no refayned feelings or she wouldn't be poppin' in and out to Mrs. Cleary worrying the poor woman and her son in a kind of coam there in the bed.

MRS. CLEARY (*smiling*): Indeed it's no nuisance you are, Mrs. Hannigan, but very welcome. When one is depressed isn't it a jolly person one likes to see. I wouldn't mind what the parson's daughter says. She talks without thinking.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*grimly*): She does, I suppose, and she often thinks without talking which is worse.

MRS. CLEARY: I find her all right then. She's a generous poor thing. 'Tisn't that I would take anything from her without doing her the good turn when it would be my time.

MRS. HANNIGAN: What special virtue is it for her to be on the give and take—don't we all do that. It's only dirt I am in her eyes, Mrs. Cleary, that's the way to say it. 'Twas only a few days ago she remarked to Mrs. Durcan that I was a rale Dublin ould wan—just like one of Jimmy O'Dea's dames from Kimmage. Did you ever in your life hear anything more insulting than that?

MRS. CLEARY: She says a lot of things and I wouldn't mind her if I were you. No pride in her now anyway, though, of course, in times past she would have experiences that we wouldn't have, Nancy Hannigan, being of a different class. That is if she is a parson's daughter.

- MRS. HANNIGAN (*significantly*): Now you have said it, Agnes Cleary, that is if she is a parson's daughter. That gay fellow, Gus Parker, the half-gent from the North Strand, would tell you about the flash ladies he knew that would all give out that they were parsons' daughters (*laughs blithely*).
- MRS. CLEARY: It would be hard to believe that Phoebe Tollermache was ever anything like that.
- MRS. HANNIGAN (*sententiously*): I'm not saying that Mrs. Cleary, I'm only alludin'. It's a fancy name she has got anyway—Phoebe Tollermache, like a concoction you'd make out from a book.
- MRS. CLEARY: I think I seen a name like Tollermache wance in the *Evening Mail*.
- MRS. HANNIGAN (*definitely*): You couldn't. It isn't a name at all and that's the way to put it. Mrs. Falvey that keeps the little grocers shop in Whitefriar's Street would agree with me about her and our so-called grand lady to walk in to her one day looking for a tosheen of tay.
- MRS. CLEARY: They might use that funny expression in the small shops in Sligo where she's supposed to have come from, Nancy.
- MRS. HANNIGAN (*shrugging shoulders*): They might and they mightn't. She's a mystery anyway. She goes off in the morning and nobody knows where she goes to. But wherever she goes to or doesn't go to she knows everything about everybody however the dickens she finds things out.
- MRS. CLEARY (*laughing softly*): I'm thinking you are prejudiced against poor Phoebe, Nancy, on account of those little sarcastic things she says occasionally, out of fun I believe.
- MRS. HANNIGAN: I suppose you'd say 'twas prejudice too, Agnes Cleary, if I gave it to you as my solid opinion that she has notions about your son Jim there.
- MRS. CLEARY (*wid a little laugh*): A poor blind man! Well, Nancy Hannigan!
- MRS. HANNIGAN: They were on a seat in the Green one day and he put his hand on hers—by accident as I saw. If you saw the way me ould damsel blushed, and the tremble that was in her voice a little later when she was excusing herself for going on a message. But, of course, the poor

man wasn't making love to her at all. He thought 'twas you were there not knowing you had moved away a bit to talk to Mrs. Durcan.

MRS. CLEARY (*solemnly*): 'Twould be a surprise to me indeed to see him do anything flirtatious. And I wouldn't mind about Phoebe. Ageing spinsters are often easily affected by little things. 'Tisn't but she has great sympathy for Jim, feeling for him like I do myself about the tragedy of his mind as she calls it, from day to day and from year to year always hoping always wishing to see again. I hope you didn't say anything to her about it, Mrs. Hannigan?

MRS. HANNIGAN (*promptly*): Not a thing. Though, indeed, she would well deserve it if I made a scrame of her over it. I'm an 'oul Joker maybe, but when it comes to sayrious matters I never say a thing to make a warnt unhappy. If I don't have something to say to make a warnt happy, I say nothin' at all. That's my motto, Agnes Cleary.

MRS. CLEARY (*warmly*): And a very good motto it is Nancy Hannigan.

MRS. HANNIGAN: Good job for her she didn't hear the snort from the damsel with the little dog who spotted the carry-out and the ugly laugh of her, or seen the wink the damsel gave me. I'm referring to one of those gay damsels with little dogs that do be paradin' the Green.

MRS. CLEARY (*deprecatingly*): I don't know anything at all about their likes, Mrs. Hannigan. Seldom we go to the Green, and except an odd time like the day you're talking about, when we do it's usually on that long bench we sit that you get to after passing through the gate opposite the Russell Hotel. Most people sitting on it are generally of the poorer or working class like ourselves, I'd say, but respectable people.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*gaily*): Respectable is the name for them, Agnes Cleary. That's the bench which my gay, poor husband Dan—the Lord be merciful to him—used call the most virtuous seat in the proletarian section of the Green (*laughs*).

MRS. CLEARY (*goes to door, opens it a little and peers out*): 'Tis like her step coming up the stairs. She has been away for the last three days and doesn't know about Jim getting that fit yet.

- MRS. HANNIGAN (*in hollow tones*): That's another mystery about her going away for three days, every six months or so. She never goes until she gets her allowance, as she calls it, or whatever it is she gets in that big yellow envelope. She'll be in form after the three days I bet and there'll be some rattlin' on that oul' pianner of hers with the wires screechin' that wasn't tuned for forty years. (*Darkly*) Brinsmead is the name that's on it, a name I never before seen on a pianner and I often looked in Piggott's window to see the names on them.
- MRS. CLEARY: I seen it wance on a big flat pianner in the parlour of a gentleman's house in the country where I was working for a short bit.
- MRS. HANNIGAN (*dryly*): Oh, did you! And of course we'll have a song. I had a pain through the napper from her the last time, with her "I'm so glad to see you back, dear lady," till she nearly burst her windpipe. We'll have a song all right. After the batter we always get a song.
- MRS. CLEARY (*sweetly*): I wouldn't say she ever has a batter, Nancy. She's one of them excited sort that a little puts on the go (*closes door*). 'Tisn't her at all after all but that oul' bachelor man that lives on the tip-top. He has a noisy step like Phoebe.
- MRS. HANNIGAN (*deliberately*): Another mystery, her fad or her foible or whatever you'd call it about Jim here and she takes no notice of th' oul' bachelor man that would suit her down to the ground. She'd pass him up and down the stairs forty times in the day and never give him the glad eye. And, I don't know but he's a prodestant.
- MRS. CLEARY: He's a woman-hater. You didn't know that.
- MRS. HANNIGAN: I did not. But she must know it. Didn't I tell you there wasn't a thing in the world but that dickens of a woman finds out.
- MRS. CLEARY: 'Tis your crony Mrs. Durcan that told me about it. Th' ould batchelor man was jilted in his young days. He's a Corkman and they say they never forgive a thing like that down in that part of the world. (*Short pause. Crosses hands*). By the way, Nancy, you never before mentioned to me this friend of yours, Mr. Gus Parker, the half-gent from the North Strand.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*laughing loudly*): Isn't it forty years ago I was talkin' of when I mentioned Gus. There would be no notice taken of him now and they all gents but in those days they were all common and Gus the dude created a furiora. Though he wasn't the dude we thought him. He used get his flash suits from a new cheap feller that set up in Mary Street long before Montague Burton or the fifty shillin' bunch who used call himself Philosander the Great City Tailor.

MRS. CLEARY: Indeed, my late husband used to get suits from that man. They were cheap and good enough.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*reminiscently*): Gus was the gayest you ever see while it lasted. But he lost his job and then the finery wasn't long coming off him. 'Twas in the month of June he moulted—the wrong month, and the last I seen of him was standing at a corner holding up a public house.

MRS. CLEARY (*reflectively*): The ups and downs of life do be queer. Isn't it a similar case with the parson's daughter or whatever she is. You'd know be her anyway that she seen things that you or I didn't see Nancy Hannigan.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*sharply*): What could she see, Agnes Cleary, that we didn't see, I'd like to know.

MRS. CLEARY: Well, she did then. You may be sure she went to Paris and places like that that we never seen.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*shrilly*): Wasn't Dublin as good as any Paris in the days I'm talkin' of Agnes Cleary. Wasn't it given down in Sullivan's geography as the second city in the Empire. Hadn't we the best companies hot from the West End of London. It might be for to keep us loyal for all I know but we had the benefit of them all the same. And when the Moody-Manners Co. would come to the Royal myself and Dan would never miss Trovatore, Maritana and the Bohemian Girl.

MRS. CLEARY: Myself or Jim used hardly ever go to a theayter; still we did see Maritana and the Lily of Killarney. The parson's daughter as you say finds out everything, still she isn't old enough to know the times you had in days gone by, Nancy.

MRS. HANNIGAN: Whether she does or whether she doesn't what right has she to be waggin' her ould amber locks at me. By the way she goes on one would think I never did any-

thing but charring all the days of my life. But if it came to expayrences—you can smile if you like, Mrs. Cleary—maybe myself and Dan, by comparison, had better expayrences than she ever had.

MRS. CLEARY: Of course we don't know what expayrence she had, Nancy Hannigan, to tell the truth.

MRS. HANNIGAN: Of course we don't, Agnes Cleary, but I know what expayrences myself and Dan had. They might be paid bigger wages now but I can tell you he had a good job in the upholstery trade and was never short of money. There wasn't a week but we would go either to the Tivoli or the Empire and we went to places that th' ould parson's daughter never saw, in our earlier married days, adventuring into funny places like the Mechanics where the Abbey Theayter is now and to Pat Kinsellas at the back of Jammets, where the ticket was fourpence, but you'd get a big mayjum bottle of stout for half the ticket when you got in. Dan used love that place.

MRS. CLEARY (*slyly*): I fancy a man would like that kind of show,

MRS. HANNIGAN: Afterwards we'd go to the Cosy in Mellifont Lane that kept open all night and where you'd get a roast duck or a boiled lobster for sixpence.

MRS. CLEARY (*laughing softly*): 'Pon my word but you did enjoy yourselves, Mrs. Hannigan.

MRS. HANNIGAN: See now, didn't we and I'd like to know what the parson's daughter was doing when she was as young as I was then, herself and her ould pianner. I bet poor Dan knew more about music than she ever did. She's crazy about Gondoliers and Mikados like the Civil Servant Dan used to be arguing with in the bar in the Gaiety gallery, who wouldn't go to no theatre except when Galbert and O'Sullivan was on. Like the parson's daughter the Civil Servant had his uppishness too and he used shrug his shoulders and laugh at Dan. But Dan used to say to me afterwards that the man should be put in a straight waistcoat. Dan would prefer the Geisha because he said he would know the aidjum of it and he'd stick to his guns that Galbert and O'Sullivan were a hotch-potch.

MRS. CLEARY (*resignedly*): Them things are beyond me altogether.

MRS. HANNIGAN: Well, indeed, I don't know the tecknikyoo of them either but Dan did, though of course 'twas at the

Empire or the Tivoli that we used enjoy ourselves most. Being a soccer fan—he used go to the match at Dalymount every Saturday—he'd nearly break his hands clappin' when Mark Sheridan would sing "At the foot-a ball match last Saturday." I'd break my hands clappin' when Mark used sing, "I do like to be beside the sea side, I do like to be beside the sea" but Dan wouldn't clap that at all.

MRS. CLEARY: That reminds me of my poor Jim—the Lord be with him—he wasn't a bit sentimental. Nothing for him but a 'tec. story. He wouldn't read a book by a woman if you paid him. So your Dan wasn't sentimental either.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*emphatically*): Oh, not a bit! I used to have pity for the more refayned looking girls on the stage of the Empire and the rattlin' they used get from the audience. "You're wasting your humanity," Dan would say to me, "every one of them has a skin on her like an elephant."

MRS. CLEARY: I suppose they have to have it and to stand the racket.

MRS. HANNIGAN: All the same Dan got the surprise of his life and so did I to see Marie Kendall who came starrin' to Dublin for thirty years cry like a child on the boards of the Tivoli in Burgh Quay after the abuse she got for singing a song about being glad to be rid of an ould man she was married to and didn't like. Marie got a right suck-in especially as it was what you would call the parson's daughter class the big people in the stalls that were bawlin' the loudest at her.

MRS. CLEARY (*somewhat primly*): Well, respectable people don't like queer songs I suppose.

MRS. HANNIGAN: 'Twasn't that at all. Dan called it a moral wave and he used laugh at the fright they had about being corrupted by English comaydiennes. It was the year the Treaty was signed. If Marie sang a song fifty times as bad now and hadn't a tack on her they wouldn't turn a hair. They are all John Bull's now.

MRS. CLEARY: Maybe they were better then and to object to a bawdy song.

MRS. HANNIGAN: 'Twasn't a bawdy song. Myself and Dan that were used to Lottie Lennox, Lily Hanbury, Vesta Tilley, not to mind George Formby (th' ould fellow not the present lad), R. G. Knowles, Wilkie Bard and all them only

laughed at it. Indeed after poor Dan's death when I was broke with four little childer to look after and had to go singing on the streets, that was the song that was my principal source of living, the same song that Marie Kendal sang at the Tivoli—the Lord be merciful to the poor ould crayture's soul.

MRS. CLEARY: So she's dead then.

MRS. HANNIGAN: I suppose she is—I don't know whether she is or not but what I'm after saying won't do her any harm anyway. Believe it or not but I got a half-a-crown from a gentleman once, when I was singing the song one Saturday night outside Dobbys in Capel Street. I had a suspicion that he seen Marie cry at the Tivoli. He gave it to me just as I was finishing up me ould umbrella waggin' and all—(*takes hold of umbrella and opens it over head*) an ould umbrella just like this one of yours, and he gave it to me just as I was at this spasm (*sings, flourishing umbrella and capering*):

And I does what I loikes

And I says what I loikes,

I'm single, I'm single again (*replaces umbrella and sits on chair*).

MRS. CLEARY (*smilingly*): There doesn't seem to be a terrible lot of harm in it. (*Noise outside.*) That's her now, the parson's daughter.

MRS. HANNIGAN: It is her.

MRS. CLEARY: Strange, but I never knew before that you were singing on the streets, Nancy.

MRS. HANNIGAN: Seldom I mention it to anyone. Maybe there are things a person likes to forget. But there being something derogatory about it and it not being so long ago altogether I bet the parson's daughter knows all about it. Hest! Is this her coming in?

MRS. CLEARY: I'd say she is coming in.

(*Enter Phoebe rapidly accidentally kicking off slipper from right foot.*)

PHOEBE (*hopping on left foot*): Blawst that slipper it's always coming off (*puts foot in slipper*). Excuse the expletive, Mrs. Cleary, and also excuse my not tapping at the door before entering. It was awfully rude of me really.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*shrilly*): Get on with yeez, Miss Tollymashy;

is it thinking it's in Fitzwilliam Square you are or in the purloos of it.

PHOEBE (*blithely*): Oh, I don't give a tuppenny for Fitzwilliam Square. (*Waving arms.*) I agree with Horace Bianchon the medical in Old Goriot, who in reply to De Rastignac, said that life could be just as interesting in the provinces as in Paris, that what really mattered was what was going on within oneself and that your whole world so to speak, is contained between the sole of the foot and the occiput. And good old Milton doesn't he tell us that "Man's mind is its own place and of itself can make a Hell of Heaven, a Heaven of Hell."

MRS. HANNIGAN: Jacky Milton the fuel man in Cross Kevin Street to say a thing like that! Who'd ever think it.

PHOEBE: No, Mrs. Hannigan it wasn't Jacky who said it, but it may have been an ancestor of his.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*dryly nodding head*): Oh, thanks for the information, Miss Tollymashy.

PHOEBE: But really, Great Longford Street is not such a bad old skin of a place, eh what, Mrs. Cleary?

MRS. CLEARY: Maybe 'tis better to be here than in the South Circular Road where they say the people are thrown out when the bed-and-breakfasters come along.

PHOEBE: Unfortunately I hear the bed-and-breakfasters have invaded Little Mary Street. So we're not safe. Especially as somehow I think we are just a shade above Little Mary Street socially (*laughs*).

MRS. HANNIGAN (*also laughing*): She don't like anything derogatory said about Great Longford Street because she's living there herself, Mrs. Cleary. (*To Phoebe*). Although you know everything, I 'spect all the same you wouldn't be acquainted with a jossor be the name of Bert Quinn, Miss Tollymashy.

PHOEBE (*off-handedly, laughing*): Oh yes, I do know him. Why shouldn't I—he comes from Protestant Row. Three years ago he got six months for breaking into a house in Drumcondra.

MRS. HANNIGAN: Well then, you might appreciate what he said to an English flyboy presumably in the same line of business as himself who was greatly interested in the purloos of this locality. Bert wasn't long spotting him

and he up and tapped him on the shoulder. "Say Cockney," said he, "you're wasting your time in inspecting the purloos of those there premises. There isn't a man, woman or child worth robbin' in Great Longford Street."

PHOEBE (*lightly*) : He must never have seen my curious old black tin box or what was in it.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*caustically*) : He must not. I suppose it is in that oul' antique tin box you keep the deeds of your properties, Miss Tollemache.

PHOEBE (*to Mrs. Cleary*) : I asked for that so I must try and take it. Really Mrs. Cleary you are too honest for either one or the other of us. Our quarrels may not be very serious but I'm afraid there are temperamental differences which render a permanent entente cordiale between us an impossibility. As the saying is we are no better than what we should be, and either of us has the very lowest opinion of the other. At least Nancy has of me. It's unknown what she thinks I am doing when I am away for those three days, and she is certain that on the day I return I am always three sheets in the wind. Yet, all I had to-day was two bottles of stout and a baby Power.

MRS. CLEARY (*smilingly*) : Well, you're both sober now anyway. Of course Nancy has been taytotal for years.

PHOEBE (*jocosely*) : Mrs. Cleary, you are too innocent for this world. So you spotted nothing. You didn't know that Nancy got a cheque from her daughter in England and that herself and Mrs. Durcan had a little celebration in the Harbour Bar.

MRS. CLEARY : It isn't too innocent I am at all Miss Tollemache but too stupid. I should have noticed there was something in Nancy's reminiscing.

PHOEBE : I shouldn't have given the game away on her of course. But, as a matter of fact I was in the Harbour Bar myself though Mrs. Hannigan didn't see me.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*grimly*) : No need to tell me you were there. I knew someone must have been saying things derogatory about me and the sharp, squintish looks Mr. Delahunt was giving me. I wouldn't mind but he being a nice friendly man that attends himself to his customers tisn't like the majority of big publicans that go off in their motor cars playin' golf all day in Malahide. (*Caustically*). So, you went in there for a bottle of lemonade Miss Tollymashy ?

PHOEBE (*lightly*): Perhaps 'twas there I had the baby Power.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*acidly*): Perhaps, but I bet you let no one see you. It's the open way with me and you can be as derogatory as you like about it but I will say God be with the times when myself and Dan, we were livin' in the North Side that time, used have the fun on Saturday nights in Magawley's licensed premises in Lower Dorset Street. 'Twasn't Baby Powers the women used drink in those days. Miss Tollymashy, but glasses of plain, but I bet we enjoyed ourselves, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, just as good and maybe better than the top-notchers you find in the purloos of the cocktail lounges. (*Gaily.*) And then, Mrs. Cleary, hadn't we the added fun of searching the pockets when the hubbies would be gone to sleep.

MRS. CLEARY (*smilingly*): Well, those times had their drawbacks.

MRS. HANNIGAN: 'Spect they had, but things are so contrary now after those old wars, for some of us anyway, that we forget what the drawbacks were.

PHOEBE: Just imagine Mrs. Cleary searching anybody's pockets though!

MRS. CLEARY: Indeed I never did, Miss Tollymache. There was no necessity with Jim. Nancy didn't know him at all, but though 'tis myself says it, Jim—the Lord be good to him—was the best man in the world. Every Saturday evening he'd land me out the whole issue barrin' what he'd keep for tobacco and matches and the few bob for Sunday. Not a drink except on a Sunday and I was glad to have him take his few bottles then for the poor man wanted some relaxation and he hard at work all the week in the Hammond Lane Foundry. I used have his dicky as white as snow for him, he used like a good bright tie, a fairly high collar and he used always wear his black bowler hat on Sundays. You'd like to see him a half-an-hour or so after his dinner as fresh as a daisy, as happy as old boots and as gay as a bee going off all by himself for his little refreshment.

MRS. HANNIGAN: 'Twas different with Dan. Dan wouldn't give you a fig for all the porter in Ireland if he hadn't company with him.

MRS. CLEARY: I suppose Jim used meet a pal occasionally but I don't think he minded someway. He had long legs and

was a great walker and he'd call in to this place and that in his rambles between two and five. I never bothered where he went at all and wouldn't know but for gossips telling me that he'd generally make his debou at the Winter Garden Palace and finish up sometimes as far away as the Ivy House or the Cat and Cage in Drumcondra, and in the summer time—I don't know whether he used take a tram or not—he'd sometimes take the fancy to go as far as Baggott's in the Park—if you know where that place is, Nancy.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*shrilly, laughing*): As if myself and Dan could miss knowing it or farther than it—Ashtown—and on a couple of occasions we even struck Blanchardstown. Myself and Dan were good walkers too. Of course we used take the tram when we'd go to the Pretty Kitchen in Kingstown on Sunday evenings, though sometimes we'd take a fit to walk back but then you can bet your davey we'd have our last little dose at Booterstown, that was also bona-fide in those days.

PHOEBE: Mrs. Cleary, you are sceptical, aren't you and so am I. Neither of us can believe that Nancy Hannigan was such a boozier.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*sharply*): Who said I was a boozier? I used only take a few glasses of plain to accompany Dan. And even if I went to Tallaght with him which I did I'd only take the same. He'd take a share certainly but he was well able to bear it. And why wouldn't he a well-fed man Miss Tollymashy. We only shamed ourselves once—through an accident—a pal of Dan's back from America who had also an English Pal who was taking photos of the five Huguenot houses in Hendrick St. to force whisky and brandy on him and forced it on me too in spite of my protestin' in a pub in Queen Street. We'd have been all right if we went home after leaving them but when we came to Bridge Street Dan would go into the Brazen Head Hotel in spite of all I could do.

MRS. CLEARY: I heard Jim saying wance that brandy makes people terrible obstinate.

MRS. HANNIGAN: It made Dan obstinate that night any way and what's worse it made him pugnacious, and he was hardly inside the Brazen Head, whoever he see, when he

started sniggering and said "Can anything good come out of Braithwaite Street!" In a minute he was tangled with somebody and a dame I suppose from the same street got tangled with me, and in the finish we were thrown out by the proprietor. Afterwards he got a terrible fall at Essex gate and nearly broke his napper and I had to hawl him home.

MRS. CLEARY (*sympathetically*): That was a terrible expayrence for you Mrs. Hannigan.

MRS. HANNIGAN: It was, but the worst of it of course was being thrown out of a place a thing that never happened to us before. "I don't mind about myself," said Dan the next day, "It's for you I feel over it," he said. And that was a compliment, Mrs. Cleary, and a genuine one. He knew I was ashamed of my life on account of it. And I never got over the shame of it to tell you the truth of it. (*Tragically*). But there is no use in denying it—we were thrown out of the Brazen Head.

PHOEBE (*laughing*): I'm bubbling up with envy, Mrs. Cleary. I never had any experience like that. What a thrill I should have got out of it.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*grimly*): It's coddling me you are now. I 'spect it's itchin' you are to tell us about the doings Mrs. Cleary says you had in Paris. High jinks.

PHOEBE: Alas, I'm afraid Mrs. Cleary is under a strange misapprehension. I'm like the poor girl in one of the musical comedies that your husband, Dan, Mrs. Hannigan, had such a high opinion of.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*to Mrs. Cleary excitedly, pointing finger*): And you didn't think she knew things so far back as that. But doesn't she! Didn't I tell yeez.

PHOEBE (*tranquilly*): Just like the poor girl in the musical comedy:—

Cold, cold, awfully cold, well I should think it was rather,
And a strawberry mark in the middle of my back
Was all I was left by my father.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*suddenly catching hold of umbrella, capering and singing*):

Cold, cold, awfully cold, well I should think it was rather,
And a strawberry mark in the middle o' me back
Was all I was left by me father.

MRS. CLEARY (*suddenly*): Nancy, Nancy don't—you might wake Jim before his time.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*replacing umbrella*): I'm ashamed of myself; I never thought about it Mrs. Cleary.

MRS. CLEARY: Don't get upset, Miss Tollemache. You didn't know he was in the room at all and anyway there isn't much wrong with him except him being sleeping like that. I didn't mind once the young doctor made a laugh about what the Agyptian doctor said. But of course you wouldn't know anything about that Phoebe.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*dryly*): I bet she does.

PHOEBE: I know about what the Indian doctor said would happen if he ever recovered his eyesight.

MRS. HANNIGAN: We always thought he was an Agyptian, didn't we Mrs. Cleary? (*acidly*). But of course Miss Tollymachy like the customer is always right.

MRS. CLEARY: Well, I did think he was an Agyptian, too, Miss Tollemache.

PHOEBE: No, an Indian. He lived in South—no in North Frederick Street. So the young doctor laughed about it—I hope he's right—but sometimes those Orientals have mysterious ways of penetrating things. (*Looking towards bed*). He seems all right, except being a little flushed.

MRS. CLEARY: He is all right. To tell the truth, Miss Tollemache, on account of what that ould doctor said I got a bit of a fright at first thinking he had got some glimmer of the eyesight. But it was a false alarm.

PHOEBE (*looking at Jim, musingly*): Yes, I suppose it was. (*Going towards door*.) Nevertheless I'll feel uneasy about him till he wakes up. You might tell me Mrs. Cleary.

MRS. CLEARY: I will, Miss Tollymache. He won't wake till eight o'clock same as yesterday and the day before. I'll tell you. (*Exit Phoebe*.)

MRS. HANNIGAN: Eight o'clock?

MRS. CLEARY: I didn't want the poor thing to be coming in again and worrying herself. By eight o'clock she might have forgotten about it and it is better for her to go to bed for herself after being out all day.

MRS. HANNIGAN: You didn't want her to come in worrying you and your son. That's the truth and you might as well admit it, Mrs. Cleary. (*Phoebe is heard playing and singing*,

"*She is far from the Land.*") That's a solemn ould thing she's dishin' out this time whatever queer notion has come to her.

MRS. CLEARY : I recollect she got very solemn when she looked at him the last time. I wonder could she have spotted anything that we didn't see.

MRS. HANNIGAN : I hope she didn't. Sure there is nothing for her to spot : isn't he looking in the pink. (*Outside someone is heard playing "The men of the West" on a whistle.*) Here's th' ould whistler now. The last time I heard him playing that was outside Farrelly's pub in South King Street when an unmannerly gent rushed out to him and asked if he could play cards. He's gone now, I 'spect somebody hunted him.

MRS. CLEARY : I didn't think he was doing it too bad then. Well, Jim will be waking up very soon now, it's near seven.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*fumbling under jacket*) : I never before carried a watch about with me till I got this affair and it keeps fairly good time. 'Pon my word, Agnes Cleary, it's gone a quarter past seven be me ould Ingersoll.

MRS. CLEARY : I didn't notice the clock has stopped and you may be right. 'Tis surprising he isn't waking up. (*Goes beside bed and observes Jim.*)

MRS. HANNIGAN : He is making some stir now.

MRS. CLEARY : He is.

MRS. HANNIGAN : Is that a little grunt I hear coming from him ?

MRS. CLEARY (*tremolously*) : It's some sound, I don't know what it is. He seems to be in some trouble about something.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*in a husky way*) : Trying to wake up maybe and can't.

MRS. CLEARY (*going rapidly to head of bed*) : He's in great trouble.

JIM (*suddenly*) : Mother !

MRS. CLEARY (*agonisingly*) : Child, child what is it ?

JIM (*half-raising himself in bed, loudly and excitedly*) : Mother, I see the moon, I see the moon (*falls back*).

MRS. HANNIGAN (*in a shocked way*) : He isn't ——

MRS. CLEARY : He is—he is dead.

MRS. HANNIGAN : That ould Aygyptian was right after all.

MRS. CLEARY: He was right.

MRS. HANNIGAN: And 'twasn't the moon the poor fella saw either but that ould lamp. It's all the same sure since he thought it was the moon. It gave him a minute of joy anyway the glame from that ould lamp and satisfied the wish that was in his mind.

MRS. CLEARY: There will be some little consolation to me in that.

MRS. HANNIGAN: That parson's daughter is wallop'in' away at her ould pianner still. (*Goes towards door.*) I'll close the door tight so that you won't be hearing her at it.

MRS. CLEARY: It is no matter at all. (*Outside "The Men of the West" is heard again.*)

MRS. HANNIGAN: The whistler is at it again so it's all the same. He's outside the "Tom Moore" now I'd say, or maybe the "Red Lion." I'll be back in a minute and I'll bring Mrs. Durcan and some more of the friends in to be consoling with you and talking to you.

MRS. CLEARY: Don't bring anyone to me for a while at any rate. I'd prefer to be alone for a bit.

MRS. HANNIGAN (*hesitatingly and somewhat doubtfully*): It's great you are Agnes Cleary and to take things so cool. It's great, so it is. Well, God bless you my poor woman, anyway.

MRS. CLEARY: God bless you also, Nancy Hannigan.

(*Exit Mrs. Hannigan. As whistling is reaching a crescendo Mrs. Cleary gives a sob and lets head fall on bed.*)

[THE END.]

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THE FREEBOOTERS

By Maurice N. Kennedy

THE tops of the mountains were hidden in drifts of mist, and the clouds were low over the fields. The air was hot and damp, full of the shrieks of seagulls following the ploughman over the humpy ground. The chocolate-coloured soil hissed quietly, monotonously back from the gleaming plough-share, covering the soft young grass. The man's shoulders were sagging under the strain of a long morning's work, watching the line of the furrow, the depth of the sole-plate, his fingers clenched on the damp wooden handles, the reins chafing his unprotected wrists. Behind him, the gulls and rooks pitched and squabbled over the newly turned earth.

The big grey horse strained over the top of the rise, and turned out onto the headland. It stood there for a minute, head hanging, while threads of steam rose from its broad, heaving flanks. The farmer leaned on his elbows on the plough-handles, and looked down over the valley, at the ribbon of road winding off into the fold of the hills. Around the distant slope, a black speck moved into view, followed by another. For a moment, the farmer watched idly, then as the specks grew larger, his eyes caught a flash of colour, and he straightened up, with a calloused palm pressed against the small of his back. He rubbed the sweat from his forehead and eyebrows with the back of an earthstained hand, and watched the road again. Then he looked around, to where his young son was squatting by the ragged hedge, peering into a rabbit burrow. "Johnny" he called. The boy looked up, and trotted towards him. "Johnny," he said, "run home and tell your mother the tinkers is comin'. Tell her to watch the chickens." The boy ran off, stumbling across the broken ground, and the farmer stood motionless on the skyline, watching the cavalcade in the valley.

Three carts were jingling and swaying in line over the uneven surface of the mountain road. Behind them trotted a band of miserable, decrepid horses. The carts were heaped with old sacks and baskets, over which sprawled the travelling people. Their clothes were dirty and torn, and their faces were swarthy, with high cheek bones and black, curly hair. On the leading cart, a tall man was slouched, with one foot trailing carelessly over the edge, and the other planted on the off-side shaft. The reins were

looped carelessly over his left hand, and he swayed to the movement of the cart over the scattered rocks and wheel tracks. He wore a tattered jacket and an old pair of flannel trousers. The toes of the foot on the shaft projected through a broken shoe. His shirt was collarless, and around his neck he wore a dirty handkerchief. On his head was a shapeless cap, black with grease, the brim pulled low over one eye. A scar ran from below one eye to the corner of his mouth, giving him an appearance of sardonic humour. He whistled softly through his teeth, and beat time on the floor of the cart with his free hand.

Behind him in the cart, his wife lay propped on one elbow, her head and shoulders wrapped in a black shawl. "Jamesy," she said, "are we near the village yet?"

"Soon enough, woman," he replied. "Can't ye rest aisy." He raised his foot from the shaft, and gave a brutal kick to the big brown jennet. It started convulsively, and broke into a lumbering gallop. The lantern which hung beneath the cart-axle began to jump about on the end of its chain. The grey-brown mongrel cur, running in the shade of the cart, lengthened its stride, and the procession banged and screeched its way down the stoney road towards the distant houses.

The Angelus began to ring from the church above the village as the carts turned into the street. The fair was nearly over. The dull strokes of the bell hung in the damp air. The frieze-clad farmers removed their hats and blessed themselves. The sound of loud voices and arguments stopped for a minute, and there was only the bellow of cattle being driven home. All the shop windows were barricaded against the press of people and animals. The ploughshares and harrows, the lines of eggs, the barrels of porter, the bicycles and scythe-handles which normally stood on the pavements outside the shops had not been put in position that morning. Groups of men in heavy overcoats and leggings stood around at the edge of the road, talking of politics and the price of cattle. Here and there, a bargain was still being struck. A squat man with bandy legs was running a rangy, bony mare up and down the road. The mare's head was high and her nostrils flaring red, while her hoofs splashed through the deep mud and filth on the road. She pranced sideways like a crab, and the small man caressed her nostrils with a practised hand. Around and through the standing groups the children were chasing, waving ashplants at one another, with shrill laughter.

The tinkers pulled in their carts at the gable of the market house, and spread out through the crowd, selling their wares—tin cans of all shapes and kinds, paper-flowers, cheap glass vases, and patriotic ballads. They walked gracefully, catlike, among the heavy countrymen, and their dark eyes were fierce and compelling. Old Patsy and his wife stood outside the open door of the public house, he took an ancient concertina from under his arm, and began to stagger through the notes of a ballad, while the cracked voice of his wife cut through the loud talk inside the house. At the end of the song they marched inside and began to sell their broadsheets of the ballad. The farmers were in good humour and bought freely and generously. When the last broadsheet had been sold, the publican called to the two tinkers and set two pints of porter in front of them. It had been a good fair. The tinkers picked up the glasses and made their way to the back wall, where they stood in silence, drinking slowly. Their eyes were veiled and scornful.

Down by the market house, the dogs of the village had gathered in a half-circle around the carts, and were snarling at the strange mongrel. The grey, bedraggled dog sat in the mud under the cart, paying no attention to the others as long as they kept their distance. A dirty sheep-dog, bolder than the rest, sidled in from the group, and began to snarl softly. The grey mongrel came to its feet, with yellow eyes blazing. Its head was low and the great ridges of muscles on its shoulders were quivering with power. The wet hairs on its back stood up in spikes, and a deep menacing rumble came from its throat. Its paws were digging into the mud. The sheep dog slowly backed away, with its tail between its legs. Then Jamesy and his wife came around the corner and broke up the circle of dogs with kicks and loud oaths. The grey mongrel curled up again under the axle-tree.

Up on the hill-farm a great cauldron of boiled potatoes stood on the centre of the flagged kitchen, and a middle-aged woman pounded them steadily with a brookstick. Outside, in the pigsty at the gable wall, the pigs heard the noise, and squealed impatiently for their food. An old tinker woman walked over the packed earth of the yard, and the chickens scattered before her. She stood in the doorway holding a bundle of vases and other gew-gaws in the fold of her shawl. The woman inside looked up from her work, and shook her head with dull patience. "No,"

she muttered, "nothing to-day." "Any old coats or trousers for the childher?" asked the tinker, arrogantly. There was no reply. She stayed in the doorway, looking at the dim interior, the huge fireplace and battered deal table, the rough chairs, religious pictures and an old oil-lamp on the walls, a huge dresser laden with crockery, chicken-feathers and dust on the stone-flags. Mag Carthy came around the western gable, by the bed of flagrant purple peonys; she was young with a sultry handsome face under a gaudy shawl, a figure like the curl of a whiplash, strength and grace in her footsteps. She looked at the old woman, who shook her head slightly. They gathered their shawls about them and went down the dusty road, leaving the gate swinging behind them. Mag Carthy walked smoothly, feeling the weight of the stolen clutch of eggs in the corner of her shawl.

The tinkers drifted back in ones and twos from their foraging and the carts moved off towards the sunset. About a mile from the village they came to a grove of trees in a curve of the roadway. There was a broad grassy patch between the plantation and the road, and bushes flanked the clearing on either side. In the centre, the bare earth showed traces of old camp fires. They pulled in their carts on the grass in a circle, unharnessed the horses and tethered them among the trees. The carts were tilted up around the edge of the clearing, forming crude shelters; under them the old sacks and blankets were piled on the grass. The women brought dry leaves, twigs and dead branches from the wood, and began to light a fire. Steam rose from the damp earth and the wet clothes of the tinkers. It was nearly dark.

Beyond the plantation was a meadow, fenced with briars and nettles, and beyond that again was a field of young wheat, the green shoots beginning to feather. Along the edge of the wheat field, alders and willows grew in a dense screen, and behind them was the river. Trout lurked in the dark holes under the tree-roots, and an otter was crouched on a sand-bank by the tail of the deep pool. The moon was coming up, huge and red through the clearing mist, behind the black range of distant hills. It rose slowly, and as it passed above the belt of mist, it grew small and silver. Farther down the stream, the water gurgled over a shoal of broken rocks, and shimmered in the moonlight. The rain clouds were blowing up from the mountain, and began to cover the sky. The moon was hidden in a black scarf of cloud, and the shallows grew dark again. Near to the bank, there

was a deep channel, where the water ran with quiet power. Under the deeper shadow of a furze-bush, a man lay like a corpse, curled up on his left side. In his right hand he held a crude three-pronged spear. Deep in the water he caught a flash of silver edging its way upstream. The muscles of his arm tensed, and the veins crawled on the back of his swarthy hand. He muttered an ejaculation.

The water-bailiff, walking softly down the bank, heard the faint sound, and stepped behind a tree. He peered into the gloom, but could see no movement. A black shadow moved catlike behind him, and a hand closed over his mouth before he could cry out; his felt hat crushed in under the weight of a heavy stone, muffling the impact, and he collapsed, unconscious against the tree-trunk. The tinker looked down at the bailiff, and sneered. There was a flurry of sound from the furze-bush, as Patsy jabbed the spear into the dark water, impaling the salmon. He rolled over on his back and clutched the spear with both hands. It took all his strength to hold the handle against the agonized struggles of the twelve-pound fish, a first run springer, fresh from the sea. After a minute of splashing and struggling, he catapulted the salmon out of the water, over the furze-bush, onto the grass. His hobnailed boot descended with a crunch on the head of the salmon; an electric shudder ran through the yard of molten silver, its gills opened convulsively, and then it lay still in the damp grass. He slipped his hands through the gills, slung the fish over his shoulder, and set off across the field, trampling the young green wheat.

The branches of resinous pine in the fire were beginning to splutter and crackle, sending out little jets of green and blue flame. The earth in a circle around the fire had been dried out and baked hard by the heat, and the dancing flames reddened the under-surfaces of the leaves on the surrounding trees. The blue smoke curled up and away into the darkness over the road. A saucepan was bubbling against the side of the burning branches, and a brace of plump chickens turned on an improvised spit over the flames. Some farmer's wife at that moment was dreaming of what she would do with the price of those chickens when they were ready for the market. She thought of the prowling fox and stirred uneasily in her sleep.

The tinkers crouched on sacks around the fire, and ate greedily, ravenously, until the last morsel had been devoured,

the frying-pan scoured with the heel of a loaf of bread, and the three-legged skillet turned up-side down to drain. They sat back in the ring of firelight, and produced short blackened clay pipes, which they filled with coarse dark tobacco, cut from a twist like a root of gnarled bog-oak. Glowing embers were pulled from the fire to light the pipes, and the tobacco smoke drifted upwards, mingled with the smoke of the fire. Old Michael, the head of the clan, rose from his position, and rummaged in the heap of rags under his coat ; he produced a large square bottle, and came back to the circle of people squatting motionless on the ground. The clear liquid in the bottle sparkled like diamonds and rubys in the light of the flames. He wrenched out the cork with his strong, tobacco-stained teeth. The biting smell of the raw spirit filled the air. He tilted back his head and swallowed a good share of the potheen. The firelight picked out the straggling grey beard on his chin and the broad flare of his nostrils. The bottle went around the group in silence, each one drinking and passing it to the next. Then Jamesy laughed, a full-throated, deep chuckle, full of the joy of life. Patsy began, very softly, to finger the keys of the concertina, in an ancient tune, and Mag took up the song, singing quietly to herself. The red light of the fire, slanting upwards, caught the high swarthy cheekbones of the people around, leaving their eyes in shadow. They sat there, as motionless as the trees behind them, feeling the warmth of the fire and the food and drink inside them. Their faces were content and happy.

Beyond the road, beyond the farthest glow of the fire the ground rose sharply to a rocky ridge, matted with heather and bracken, Stark in silhouette against the starry sky crouched the mongrel, while with upthrown head and full throat he howled at the full moon. Far away, in the next valley, by the sleeping farmhouse the sheep dog heard the call, where she lay in the corner by the rain-barrel. She came to her feet and waited until the call came again, then slipped through the fence like a shadow, and began to lope across the valley. Behind her, the farmer and his family slept soundly under the thatched eaves, and in the outhouses, the fowl roosted quietly, while the fox moved quietly on his belly through the weeds towards the low-lying buildings.

HAMLET AND OPHELIA

By J. Lyle Donaghy

THERE is an initial presumption that when a man observes accurately the concrete phenomena of the visible material universe, in an order and balance which is representative of their reality he will bring the same faculty of observation and assessment to the things less visible but concrete and ascertainable of the heart and the mind, and, probably, on occasion at any rate, to things called abstract. Spenser, pleasant melodist though he be, and, on a few occasions, poet of beautiful song, may confuse the flowers, the birds, and their seasons, and, on that account, be to the wise, to their instinct no less than to their intellect an untrustworthy exponent of the ultimate truths of human nature. Not so the Swan of Avon. He who observed accurately and in a profound order and balance of reality, the flowers, the birds and their seasons, the bellowing ocean and the cottage garden, and who brought away with him in faithful memory, the tides, the embossed floods, the murmuring and guttering sounds of the sea, its numbering the myriad stones, the violet of the bank, and the clove-pink of the garden, the woods, the skies, the sunset, and all the creatures of the woodland, and as well the rustic dwellers of thorp and village, and beholding everything with a sympathy of seeing which gave profundity to his vision, he brought to bear upon human nature in general and upon the course of human life, the same faculty for accurate and profound observation in the order of reality, and the same power of assessing values—the same trustworthy outlook.

His view of womankind was akin to Scott's, and like Scott's was essentially in the romantic-chivalric tradition, but it was more fundamental than Scott's, much more deeply rooted in his own experience, and in human nature, as he had observed it, in the country, in the city, and at court. The women whom he depicts in his plays are likewise more strongly drawn, more profoundly created. That he regarded women ideally there is no possible doubt. Practically all his heroines are variations in one way or another of the ideal woman of the romantic-chivalric tradition. Sometimes they lean more to mirth and fun, as Rosalind and Celia brought through the woodland in male garb, unfailingly apt in their play, and unfailingly delicate in spite of it. Sometimes like Portia in "The Merchant of Venice" they lean more to practicality; Sometimes, like Ophelia and Desde-

mona, more to the gentle romance or the beautiful simplicity of true love. But regard them all, Rosalind, Celia, Viola, the two Queens, Catherine, the two Portias, Ophelia, Desdemona, Cordelia, Miranda, Imogen, and she of the clove-pink garden, one and all, or one and all omitting, for the moment, Juliet, who is simply beautiful humanity, real as life, they are cast from the romantic—chivalric ideal, one and all they fulfil naturally and exquisitely the ideal of beauty, of nobility, of sympathy, fidelity, trust. One and all they give expression to the ideal of women as the equal, fit partner of not-ignoble man.

Even his Cleopatra Shakespeare has ennobled with a fine poetic pride; and his Lady Macbeth, the only, or almost the only, villain-heroine whom he created, partakes both of our pity and our admiration: the moody ambition was Macbeth's own and the vacillating; purpose the play, moreover, gives one the definite impression that the idea of murdering Duncan had originated in Macbeth's own mind, and that his consort would have abetted him as firmly in a nobler purpose; she was firm-willed when a decision had been made, she would have slain her own infant, 'plucked the nipple from his boneless gums and dashed his brains out, had she so sworn as he had done', she stood firmly by the act committed, as at the banquet when her husband, 'with most admired disorder' broke up the feast, but withal she was a woman, and her woman's nature broke down under the strain, she walked in her sleep, and uttered that piteous expression of overstrained and overburdened nature:

"Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand. Oh! oh! oh!" She died before Macbeth. Such was Shakespeare's one and only great villain-heroine. His Goneril and Regan are so extremely drawn as to be rather dramatic caricatures of their characters, by which means, I think, Shakespeare deliberately spared our feelings, and again evinced his respect for womanhood.

Remembering that it is not generally, certainly not firstly, by a meticulously scholarly investigation, that we arrive at a correct appreciation of a dramatist's intentions in the creation of his characters (even with infinite scholarship and much breadth of view such an investigation tends to be dis-proportioning), but rather by a natural power of receiving impressions, the power for which the dramatist wrote, and by a natural sympathy with the author's mind, let us now look more closely at Hamlet and

Ophelia as lovers. I recall my earliest impressions of them—impressions which have never altered.

I see Hamlet in moodily expressive monotone deliver his famous soliloquy, which, for all its intelligence, is chiefly an expression of mood. He concludes his soliloquy, but the mood continues and almost as a part of it, within its expressed monotony, he sees Ophelia approaching, an arm is half raised as though he beheld, for a moment himself unperceived, and in the same subdued tone he continues "Soft you now, the fair Ophelia", and, still as if alone, almost as if speaking to himself still, in the same unmistakeably quiet and meditative tone, "Nymph, in thy orisons be all my sins remembered." (Then he makes a quick impulsive advance to her). The remark never was uttered, or conceived by the dramatist to be uttered, to any but a chaste and gentle and *gently admired* Ophelia, its tone and rhythm, and even its rapid easy tempo, breathe established gentle love-regard. Hamlet's "I did love you, once" does not express love past and done with, but, rather, love vexed and perplexed in the present, or expressed together with the vexation and perplexity of his recent and present preoccupying mood. Similarly, the more harsh-sounding speech, "I have heard of your paintings, too", is all in the same mood and is obviously too extravagantly worded to be really meant—neither is it the language he would have used to a harlot or to one whom he thought such, or looked upon in that light—it is sensibly and obviously the language of love and vexation. Nor, even in his spleen, does Hamlet bid her go to street or brothel, but, "Go, get thee to a nunnery", while the addition 'for be thou as chaste as thou may', "thou shalt not escape calumny", is like a partial retrieval, or mitigation of his unkindness in the more harsh-sounding speeches.

As to Ophelia, what is there against her?—Old Polonius's carelessly free Elizabethan expression "I will loose my daughter to him"—in sane criticism, nothing. To Hamlet's "I did love you once", she replies "Indeed, my Lord, you made me believe so." It is the speech of gentleness and modesty—truth and love. Nor is her speech "Oh! what a noble mind is here o'erthrown" the speech of one merely lightly in love. It rings too sincerely for that. Ophelia evidently appreciates Hamlet's intellectual and spiritual qualities, and loves him truly, if gently. Nor would Shakespeare ever have given to a wanton those exquisitely beautiful flower-songs of Ophelia, or ever have made her so sweetly so

unhappy-sad—except he had wished to picture true-love's hurt. That Ophelia thought Hamlet deranged, or was partly deceived into thinking so, need not be held surprising. Meeting him in his vexed mood, she was at a disadvantage, for the madness of Hamlet was evidently court scandal—had they not 'been fooling him to the top of his bent.'

And when Ophelia is dead, and Laertes leaping into her unfilled grave weeps and complains, is it not the same Hamlet who leaps into the grave, and, vexed, perplexed, and now thoroughly disillusioned about Court and King and Queen, friends and all the world, protests that he will outrant Laertes in her grave. It is the same speaker, in the same painful mood intensified and approaching its climax. Had he loved her?—he certainly appreciated and admired her, he was emotionally affected by her very kindly—but, in his mood in the play, perplexedly as with everything and very vexedly.

The truth is that this is not the play of Hamlet's mind, or life, or tragical history—it is the play of one of his moods and of an hour of his life, and swept along in that tantalized and troubled mood, of doubts, dislikes, suspicions, broodings, hesitations of a kind not unreasonable, horror and loathing of a world in which his mother had become like the enthroned principle of pollution and evil, murderous treachery's concubine—swept along in that intense and unresolving mood is his love of Ophelia—apparently, from the quality of its expression in this mood a delicate interest, an appreciative affection.

Was Hamlet mad?—Pooh!—Was he the excessively meditative or introspective type? Was he mentally constitutionally hesitant? Should he have taken the ghost's word at once? Should he have slain his Uncle at the Altar? All these questions have been asked foolishly and futilely again and again, and the answer is Pooh! and again Pooh! An even more foolish type of question has sometimes been asked, 'Had he some brand or other of Oedipus complex?', to which the answer is Pooh! and Pah!

Quite obviously he was not mad, quite obviously he was not excessively hesitant, quite obviously he was, on the whole, simply rightly rational, quite obviously in fit time and place he would have been as gentle and true-meaning a lover as he was an active investigator, and in time and place, eventually, an active swordsman. Some of his gestural speeches are extrovert enough to put one in mind of martial trappings and the war-camp.

He was practical to the last, too, for he cared even for his own reputation after death—and his last preoccupations are with the news from England which he shall not hear, the election and Fortinbras who has his dying voice—

“So tell him, with the occurments more and less.” With his dying the mood passes, the hour is over—the rest is silence”, and tragedy shares with sorrow the throne of intellect. The characteristically Shakespearean conclusion—Fortinbras’ return and the affairs of State—releases our pent groan as a sigh in prospect of the new and possibly brighter era.

August 31, 1948.

WILL YOU ASK ME TO YOUR PARTY?

By K. Arnold Price

I WAS quite old, nearly eight years old before I began to understand that there was something queer about the two Muspratt girls, Janet and Jinny. At least, there was something queer between them and us, for they never came to our house and we never went to theirs although it was quite near.

It was a tight-looking, sad, grey house with a straight avenue that came out just above ours on the Croagh road. Behind it there was a big fruit garden and beside it an old fort covered with a thicket of quick. The whole place was called The Fort. The windows of the house were always blank and dark and you never saw anyone come out of the front door.

Poor things, said my mother, I expect they sit in the kitchen. They couldn’t afford two fires.

In the spring Janet sold chickens and ducks and settings of eggs, in the summer strawberries and raspberries and in the autumn honey and apples. They said that Janet chopped all the wood they burned, fed the chickens, picked the fruit and looked after the bees. In the summer Janet wore a grey tweed coat and skirt; in the winter she wore a dirty waterproof over it. You never

saw Jinny without Janet. They would go to the meets in a pony trap, Janet driving and Jinny in a fur hat with her hands in a muff. At the Croagh Flower Show and at the races they would stand about together and get themselves photographed. We used to meet them sometimes out walking, Janet lumbering along with a basket, Jinny holding on a big hat or pressing a muff to her face. We would stop to talk and Janet would rummage in the pocket of her waterproof and bring out a crumpled bag of liquorice and hold it out to me. I was young and rude then and would shake my head and back away. I didn't like Janet. I didn't like her hoarse voice or her red chapped hands or the way she scratched them as she talked. And I didn't like liquorice.

Why are you never nice to Miss Janet? said my mother. She's a dear.

Heart of gold, said my father.

I don't like her, I said, I like Miss Jinny better.

It seemed to me that they both sighed. I did like Miss Jinny. I thought she was beautiful. She had a soft look and she always smelt nice. She was quick and bright like a bird. She would come up to you, and say something softly into your ear as if it was a secret and then bite her lip and laugh and run away. She had a funny gasping laugh that sometimes went up in a whoop as if she had whooping-cough. I think I really liked her because I knew that she liked me, though I didn't find out why until after she was dead.

One day there was a meet at The Fort. My father wouldn't go, but I went on Gypsy with Tommy riding Whiskey. While we were all waiting in front of the house, Jinny was suddenly there at my stirrup fondling Gypsy with her little smooth hand.

Isn't he the grand horse! she gasped. She was looking at Whiskey. Darling horse! Love Whiskey! Will Colin let Tommy jump?

I said no, that we were only following a bit of the way. Jinny was the only one who called my father Colin to me. I liked it for I called him Colin too.

Have you any photos of Whiskey? she said, almost whispering. I'd love a photo of him! Grand horse! Could you give me a snap of him?

She cocked her bright eye at me just like a robin waiting for a worm. I said that of course I would, and she broke away from me laughing and then Janet came up. I always forgot to bring her the

snap and she had to remind me three times, and then, to make up for forgetting, I gave her the very best one, off my mantelpiece ; Whiskey standing in the yard with Colin on his back, both looking very handsome, I thought.

When my mother asked me one day to show it to someone I had to make up a story that it fell into my candle and got burned.

Just before my birthday I was sent over to The Fort for some honey. As I was coming away Jinny ran out to me and I told her I was going to be nine and was having a party.

A party ! What fun ! she gasped. She looked very bright. Will you ask me to your party ? she said laughing. I didn't answer at once because I was puzzled. She looked excited and I thought she was making game of me. Then she came close to me.

Colin always asked me to his parties ! she whispered. And he always came to mine ! We had great fun.

She put her soft hand on my wrist and swayed me to and fro. Are you going to ask me to your party ? she said.

Of course I am, I said and to make it true I started walking home very fast because I wanted to rush in to my mother and tell her she must send an invitation to Miss Jinny. But when I was half way up the drive and saw the sober face of the house, it checked me and I began to slow down. And as I went round to the side door I saw my mother sitting at her desk under the smoke-room window, and I went very slowly indeed. At last I pushed the smoke-room door open and lagged in, trailing my waterproof and came to a full stop in the middle of the floor.

Well, noodle, said my mother. What are you staring at ? Don't look so stupid, child ! Had you no gloves ? Give the honey to Anastasia and hang up your coat.

I trailed out again and into the kitchen where Anastasia was ironing. Anastasia told me to go back and wipe my feet and hang up my waterproof and put the honey on the dresser and give the fire a blow as she was going to make bread. So I went back and gave my feet a sort of a wipe and threw my coat on the bench and came back and sat down to turn the wheel bellows.

I heard the thump, thump of Anastasia's iron and her high lamenting voice as she ran from one thing to another without a pause. I didn't notice what she was saying, her voice was just one of the nice kitchen noises.

I felt sad and awkward and ashamed. I knew I was not going to ask my mother to send an invitation to Miss Jinny. It irked me

that I couldn't say it ; there were so many things that I couldn't say to my mother, so many silences and so many questions that couldn't be asked.

Even after the party was over, I still felt awkward and I managed not to be sent on any more errands to The Fort, so that for months I didn't see Miss Jinny. That was in February. It must have been about the end of June that the very queer thing happened.

The weather was so hot that I had been moved from my own room under the south gable to a north room looking out on the drive. It was a small room over the porch jammed between the guest room and my mother's room.

That morning I woke suddenly with a feeling that everyone was up and I should be up too. I had no clock and lay listening for a while. The house was perfectly still and yet I was sure that people were awake and moving about. In that room I was too far from the kitchen to hear Anastasia getting breakfast and I could never hear my father and mother talking next door. I lay looking at the light on the ceiling and thinking that perhaps, after all, I was mistaken and it was still very early. It is hard to tell the time by the sun when your room looks north, but my bed was beside the window and the air coming through the muslin curtains had an early smell. It pushed the curtain softly against the bed and then sucked it back and I was beginning to go sleep again rocked on the to and fro of the curtain, when suddenly I heard a sound that brought me completely awake.

Under my window someone laughed. It was a soft hee-haw, exactly as if a donkey had tried to bray in a whisper. There was no one in the house who laughed like that. My father and mother both had a good ordinary ha-ha, and Anastasia never laughed. She did sometimes give a kind of squawk. You wouldn't call it laughing. The laugh I heard was Jinny Muspratt's ; and yet it couldn't be Jinny in our house and at that time of the morning.

I lay as still as a mummy from astonishment, scarcely breathing ; my skin began to prickle with a sort of fear. It was so very odd. I longed to hear some ordinary noise, something that I knew. Then in a minute I did hear a very familiar sound, though it was only a tiny one. It's a hard one to describe.

It was a tiny clatter, a tiny jingle and a sort of shuddering purr, all mixed up and lasting only about three seconds. I had heard it before many a time. It was my bratty pony Gypsy,

giving herself a good shake as she stood in the shafts. It was so near and so real that I rolled out of bed and peered down through the window and there, sure enough, was Gypsy, standing in front of the porch, harnessed to the trap. My mother was standing holding her head. She looked funny standing in the bright morning air in her blue dressing-gown with her thick plait hanging down her back—my mother who was never to be seen not completely dressed. There was only one thing it could mean. Colin was catching the 8.20 from the junction and she would go back to bed after he had gone. I crouched down, clutching the low window ledge, waiting to see him come out. He came in a minute, walking quite slowly. He had his arm round a woman's waist and was looking down at her and she was smiling up at him. They walked very sedately up to the trap like a bride and bridegroom coming out of church and she got in and he got in after her and spread the rug over her knees. Colin took up the reins and my mother slipped back and Gypsy went off at her hard trot down the drive.

The woman was Jinny Muspratt. I got back into bed and drew the clothes up to my chin. I was cold. I twitched and trembled with cold. I would have to wait till breakfast time to know what it meant. I heard the clock on the stairs warming up to strike. It struck six slow strokes and stopped. It was always a bit fast. That meant that Colin had taken Jinny Muspratt for a drive at half-past five in the morning. It didn't make sense. I thought over all the things it could be and it couldn't be any of them.

It couldn't be cubbing or fishing or mushroom-picking, or a fair. It wasn't a wedding or a funeral or a wake. It was something I didn't know about.

I thought I couldn't go to sleep again but I must have done, for Anastasia had to call me and I was late down to breakfast. I came into the room with a run and then stopped, for my mother and father were both there, eating their breakfast as if they had just got up and talking about the Flower Show. I looked from one to the other.

Colin said, Eat your porridge, you're late, and covered my porridge with brown sugar and went on talking. They didn't talk to me and they did not say anything about Jinny and because of that I finished my breakfast quickly and ran out to the stable with a feeling of escaping. Then I turned round and stared at the house as if I didn't know it. It had gone strange to me. A secret

is a very separating thing. Even long afterwards, when Miss Jinny was dead and my parents spoke freely about her, they never spoke of what occurred that morning, and I never told them what I had seen. This is the first time I have put it into words.

And yet, queer as it was, it went out of my mind, or seemed to, because all that summer we never saw Janet or Jinny.

It was one afternoon early in November I came to the side door very hungry and hoping for the smell of baking soda-bread, and saw through the glass Colin, my mother and Anastasia standing together. I knew by the shape of their shoulders that something had happened and my heart began to thump as I opened the door. Anastasia was crying.

Didn't I rear her! bellowed Anastasia. Wouldn't she fall asleep on my lap every night!

But she'd never have been better, Stacey, said my mother.

The loveliest girl! said Anastasia, still howling. A little queen she always was! The whitest skin you'd see anywhere—

She was blue when we took her out, said Colin. He turned to go and saw me. He looked hard at me as if he couldn't remember who I was.

Colin! I said, whispering, Who? Who?

Miss Jinny, he said, very shortly. Drowned. We've been dragging the river.

Then he went into the smoke-room and my mother followed him and shut the door. I followed Anastasia into the kitchen. Anastasia was still crying but she cut a thick slice of soda bread, put butter and raspberry jam on it and shoved it into my hand. I stood looking at it; I didn't know whether I was going to eat it, or cry, or be sick. I didn't mind Jinny being dead but I minded her being drowned. I minded her being blue. I was furious with Colin for saying she was blue. I could only see her as I saw her last, soft and bright and laughing in her own yard.

Stacey! I said. She wanted to come to my birthday party! and then I did begin to cry.

God help her! said Stacey. There was a time we thought your father and she would make a match of it. Wasn't it the mercy of God he married your mother?

DRAMATIC COMMENTARY

By A. J. Leventhal

- THE MOONLIGHTER. By George Fitzmaurice. Earlsfort Players.
THE KING OF FRIDAY'S MEN. By M. J. Molloy. Abbey Theatre.
THE BRIERY GAP. By T. C. Murray. Abbey Experimental Theatre.
LIGHT FALLING. By Teresa Deevy. Abbey Experimental Theatre.
CAVALIERO (THE LIFE OF A HAWK). By Terence Smith. Abbey Experimental Theatre.
AS THE CROW FLIES. By Austin Clarke. Lyric Theatre Company.
THE ONLY JEALOUSY OF EMER. By W. B. Yeats. Lyric Theatre Company.
BLUEBEARD. By Mary Devenport O'Neill. Lyric Theatre Company.
NICOLAS FLAMEL. By Gerard de Nerval. Translated by Seamus O'Sullivan. Abbey Experimental Theatre.

George Fitzmaurice had to wait well over thirty years for the realisation on the stage of his play *The Moonlighter*. It was not, as one might have expected the Abbey Theatre that paid this belated tribute to the work of one of the most imaginative dramatists of the revival but an amateur company—the Earlsfort Players. It is not one of his best plays. There is too much violence, too much of the *drame où Margot a pleuré*. Nevertheless, the action is wedded to a dialogue that shows a mastery of what used to be called the “Anglo-Irish idiom” and which, in the mouths of trained actors would have smoothed, if it did not entirely eliminate, the roughnesses of plot. The imaginative phrase deftly delivered could have shaded some of the seeming crudities of the amateur interpretation. Not that Liam Miller, who both produced the play and designed the setting, was without feeling for the finer points of the dramatist’s purpose; it was inevitable that the untutored cast could not rise to the demands inherent in the text and that passion should, in these circumstances, make no braver show than a tatterdemalion. These may sound harsh words but should not be taken as a discouragement to the young company that undertook a task beyond its powers. Its ability just fell short of its ambition. The worthiness of the ambition, however, is in itself praiseworthy and perhaps the Earlsfort Players may think it worth their while to revive Mr. Fitzmaurice’s *The Piedish* which appears to have been permanently laughed off the Abbey Theatre stage by audiences which, even forty years ago, were tickled into mirth at the wrong moments. Here is Ernest Boyd’s retrospective comment:

“Accustomed to the farcical entertainment so frequently provided, audiences had gathered who were unable to appreciate this exposition in terms of folk-drama of the familiar struggle between the Paganism of the artist and the conventions of Christianity.”

The bad old days of the Abbey Theatre began a long time ago.

As I write, M. J. Molloy’s *The King of Friday’s Men* enters on its seventh or eighth week at the last named theatre. This play might have ranked among this theatre’s highest achievements were it not for some crudities of technique.

Mr. Molloy has inherited some of the magic speech imagery in the Synge-Fitzmaurice tradition. He makes a character say that the wine was so good that it could be drunk out of a tinker's apron. I should have liked to have had a copy of the text to quote correctly phrases that had a true folk originality. His colourful prose made it all the more regrettable to find that Boucicault of impious melodramatic memory appeared to be one of his influences. There were, however, passages in the play, apart from phrase-making, whose lyricism and pathos stamp the author as being capable of better craftsmanship, when he has learned to leave the century-old moth-eaten cloak and rusty sword in the ancient prop-wardrobe. I must refer to the memorable love-scene between Bartley Dowd (Bhailtear O Maoin) and Una Brehony (Rite Ni Fhuarain) in which the mighty wielder of the shillelagh was, like many a strong man, made dumb by the intensity of his passion. The audience laughed, but there was real pathos in his awkwardness and genuine emotion in his shy advances. Mr. Molloy can create type as well as character as in the case of Rory Commons, the last of the bards, played by Brian O'Higgins with comic skill.

While this play runs to the often misplaced merriment of packed houses, the Experimental Theatre in the Peacock annexe has begun to devote itself to the original repertory theory of the parent institution. So far we have had two weeks given up to the production of one-act plays of a nature that does not call for long runs. If one can judge by letters to the press, sections of Dublin audiences resent themes on the stage which they accept in their cinemas and lending libraries. For this reason, perhaps, T. C. Murray's *The Briery Gap* might have caused growlings among the groundlings in the present mood of audiences in the larger theatres. The action of this one-act play moves round a girl, her seducer and a priest, and ends in the girl's self-imposed death. It is a brave little effort in tragedy and frank speech, but even though we are prepared for the end by the girl's hysteria, her abrupt suicide has not the inevitability that tragedy demands.

Teresa Deevy's *Light Falling* is written in a subtler mood. There is, however, more subtlety in the atmosphere than in the characters. The young husband, played by Eamonn Ceitinn, is attracted by the wife of an English visitor and finds his own wife (a part which Ita Little invests with a non-stop overpowering liveliness) dull by comparison, but, with the departure of the foreign temptress, settles down to appreciate the virtues of his legal spouse as though there had never been a tree of knowledge in his domestic cabbage patch. I am reminded of a remark of her father's which Blanaid Salkeld once quoted to me and which appears to sum up the moral of the piece: "There is not the difference of a cow between two women in Ireland."

Terence Smith's *Cavaliero* is a first play and has a curious application of symbolism to a rather arbitrary Irish background. One might have expected it to have been written in the heyday of Maeterlinckian influence if it had not had a subtlety lacking in those early dramatic essays in which symbol was painfully piled on symbol for cumulative effect. There is an effort here to let the subconscious take dramatic control of events. Material symbols are restricted to the hawk. The conflict of minds, suggestion, and almost pathological mental states play their curious parts in this of necessity confused or rather cloudy drama. There are only two characters: His Honour and Dinny, the invalid aristocrat and the country lad. The former is a kind of intellectualised Marquis

de Sade whose bath-chair existence is made tolerable for him by engineered cruelties and by living vicariously on the vitality of his employee. The hawk, pursued, imprisoned and finally killed, is the strange bond between these two people. Rarified and esoteric though this play be, its production by H. L. Morrow and its acting by Eamon Guaili and Ragnall Breathnach gave it a significance and a moving quality which suggests that the author may find a less misty dramatic formula for his next work.

The Lyric Theatre Company continues on its straight, but by no means narrow, poetic path. For two consecutive Sundays the Dublin public filled the Abbey Theatre and showed that verse drama is still a force in the artistic life of the city. Mary Devonport O'Neill's verse flowed easily and musically in her revived *Bluebeard*. George Green in the title part and Maureen Cusack as the seventh wife delighted the audience with their sincerity. The ending, however, in which the six fleshly mummies dance, or rather stamp, without music in a sarabande around the body of their dead executioner bordered on the comic. If they had merely pointed long accusing fingers the purpose would have been adequately served.

The Only Jealousy of Emer was a triumph of acting and production. Shelah Richards, as Emer, was an ideal altruistic wife, whilst Eithne Dunne, as Eithne Inguba, rose nobly to the part of mistress of "that amorous, violent man, renowned Cuchullain" whose role was ably borne both in spirit and flesh by T. St. John Barry and Bart Bastable, respectively, despite their masks which hindered the clarity of their speech. Christine Kane danced us into a Yeatsian sidhe mood so that we longed to do what Cuchullain desisted from doing, that is, to follow her into the Country-under-Wave. She wisely refrained from speaking the lines written for her in the play lest they should spoil the rhythm of her dance. A narrator (Joan Stynes) took this task upon herself and saved the ballerina her breath and made it possible for us to enjoy the dance in its unvoiced purity.

Austin Clarke is never more happy than when he brings monk and pagan into conflict. He has ample occasion for this in *As the Crow Flies* which is described in the programme as a dramatic fable based on an old Irish folk-tale. There is more fable than drama in his play, more speech than action. But it is a rich speech with which he calls up the Ireland of the seventh century. This work is as full of thought as the hermit's cave in the play and like Brother Aengus, we have difficulty in catching up on our breath. Written in the first instance for radio production there are echoes in the stage presentation of the 'effects' associated with that medium. One might have dispensed with 'rising storms.' On the other hand, the eye was lavishly catered for. The Eagle of Knock and the Crow of Achill were not only brilliantly dressed by Gillian Nuttal-Smith, but beautifully spoken by Marjorie Williams and Florence Lynch; the Salmon of Assaroe (Ruaidhri Roberts) really looked as though he had prayed for a thousand years. If *As the Crow Flies* is not a play in the strictest sense, it is a dramatic poem that stirs the mind and at the end we shiver like Brother Aengus sensing

"The ancient thought that man endures at night."

Goethe once said that he never understood himself better than when he read his *Faust* in Gerard de Nerval's translation. De Nerval's shade might

easily have said the same thing about Seamus O'Sullivan's translation of *Nicolas Flamel*. For, not only has the French fragment been translated into an easily spoken English, but it has been given an ending in perfect accord with the extant text. The Abbey Experimental Theatre produced this four-scene play together with W. B. Yeats's *Dreaming of the Bones* and Arthur Power's *Barn Dance* in their second presentation this season. Eamon Guaili played a Flamel that was convincing both in his devotion to alchemy and to his wife. He was prepared for the destruction of his work on the philosopher's stone but the threat to the parchment on the perfect happiness of "me Nicolas Flamel and of Pernelle my wife" drove him to Satan. The latter (competently played by Pilib O Floinn) trips himself in his own diabolical sophistry when he suggests that Pernelle (a little less than good performance by Peig Ni Mhurcadha) be thrown in with her husband in the traditional soul contract. The final scene shows the couple re-united, ready to face life, neither in the heights nor in the depths but amid the sacred and familiar things on earth. The curtain descends as the bailiffs knock loudly on the door.

Art Notes

By Edward Sheehy.

AN T-OIREACHTAS. Municipal Gallery, Parnell Square.

DUBLIN PAINTERS' EXHIBITION. The Gallery, St. Stephen's Green.

RECENT PAINTINGS BY FATHER JACK HANLON. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

RECENT PAINTINGS BY PATRICK HENNESSY, R.H.A. The Victor Waddington Galleries.

OSKAR KOKOSCHKA. Edited by James S. Plaut. The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston. Max Parrish. London. 15s.

THE PAVILION. A Contemporary Collection of British Art and Architecture. Edited by Myfanny Evans. I.T. Publications Ltd. (N.P.)

"Nor is the great expansion of our sensibility a dispersion, nor is to universalise to thin out. It is, for a time, to thicken. Picasso, who is the champion swallower of cultures, absorbed, at the height of his capacity, on an average of two or three a year. When all the cultures have been digested we shall become a new cultural creature, an Earth Man."

So writes Wyndham Lewis in an article, which is the critical highlight of the first number of *The Pavilion*, entitled "Towards an Earth Culture or the Eclectic Culture of the Transition." The writer argues from a number of facts in the present situation that we are in the process of developing from local or national cultures in the direction of an all-pervading world-culture. He points out, quite truly, the amazing diversity in technique and intent of the art that is called modern; that contemporary artists derive both inspiration and technique from the cultures of diverse civilisations. He sees that painters like Piper, Graham Sutherland or Nash are as popular in the hitherto isolationist Middle West as in their native England. The argument is well sustained; but for my part I do not find the solution quite so simple. The logic of history, allowedly intermittent, does lead to the concept of political and economic internationalism.

But is an international culture a necessary corollary? I think it was Toynbee pointed out that a genuine political internationalism would, paradoxically, lead to an increase in purely local autonomy in all but major administrative spheres. In the past, cultural minorities were liable to be ironed out in the conflict of national rivalries. If we translate the word "culture" from its restricted Chelsea connotation we find that cultural internationalism to-day, while it may bring Chagall to Chicago, is more potent in disseminating the influence of Samuel Goldwyn, Frank Sinatra and Bing Crosby over a far wider field. Self-conscious internationalism, without a philosophy of similar scope, is dangerous to the artist. In the past, the artist of widest appeal has always been the one who most intensely realised and expressed his own environment. The universality, within his civilisation, of the Mediaeval or Renaissance artist, was due to the fact that he could take the universality of certain values for granted. If Picasso, who may be taken as the modern painter *par excellence* is a "champion swallower of cultures," may it not be because he has no well-founded culture of his own? These few random ideas, provoked by the article, cannot be taken as a substitute for the serious consideration which the article deserves, but which must be postponed till some other time. The magazine contains also an interesting, well-informed and well-illustrated article on Francis Johnston, the 18th century Irish architect, by John Betjeman.

One might expect the Oireachtas Exhibition, held in connection with the annual Gaelic festival of that name, would attempt selection with some kind of nationalist bias. The exhibition is, however, no more significantly national than the Academy, apart from the language of the catalogue; nor does it differ greatly from the Academy in any other way. If I were asked to pick out works bearing the stamp of their origin I should have no stronger criterion, in all but one or two instances, but the painter's selection of a local subject. On the whole, the exhibition was interesting but mixed. A few fine pictures stood out from the general competent mediocrity; while more than a few of the pictures, selected, I suspect, on other than pictorial grounds, were both amateurish and provincial. I liked Daniel O'Neill's quietly toned and subtly formalised *An Pósadh*. He is a painter with a sensuous feeling for both pigment and surface quality and he has an imagination which transmutes rather than translates reality. Sean O'Sullivan's pub-interior, a witty, slightly mordant piece of observation in warm and harmonious colour, made me wish I could see this painter more frequently liberated from the exigencies of portraiture. Though I am not usually attracted by academic impeccability and never for its own sake I find a genial warmth and intimacy in William Leech's *Margadh na Hatai, Concarneau*. Remembering his one-man show of some years ago I feel that this place has evoked some of his best work. Elizabeth Rivers, who made her name with delicate and decorative woodcuts, shows a patient but rewarding earnestness in her development as a painter. With her oils she has entered a totally different world and does, I feel, appreciate its problems. Her *Ogánach ag Iompar Fín Mhairbh* here shows subtle mastery of form and a fine freedom in the use of rich and vibrant colour. In the sculpture, Oisín Kelly's *Torso* was strong, simple and vigorous; though I must confess to finding his medium, cement, unsympathetic. George Barry Laffan's *Crucifixion*, lyrically formalised and decorative in a good sense, shows considerable talent.

It is disappointing to find a painter of Patrick Hennessy's undoubted talent

producing an exhibition of pictures which, in choice of subject, technique, mood, or anything you wish, are indistinguishable from anything he has done during the past four years. Even the most charitable critic will tire of perpetually eulogising his expert rendering of tactile values, his harmonious, subtle, if somewhat morbid, palette, his generally, though not quite so invariably balanced composition, when these instruments are used perpetually to produce the same effects, create the same moods utilising even the same props. Rightly or wrongly, the critic expects some development, especially in a young and talented painter, unless the work of to-day is to appear a mere a pastiche of that of yesterday. Perhaps it was because I was in search of something different that the semi-abstract *The White Jug* appealed to me; though I would hazard a guess that this picture belongs to a period before Hennessy perfected his present and better-known style, which, to judge by several pictures in the present exhibition, is in danger of leading to the amorphous in composition. For all that there were some beautiful pictures in his individual and impeccable manner, notably *The Victorian Plate* with its harmony in green and *The Guest Room* with its sombre atmosphere.

I was not particularly impressed by Letitia Hamilton's *Meath Hunt Point-to-Point Races*, exhibited at the Dublin Painters', though it had been awarded the Bronze Medal at this year's Olympic Games. The crowded composition lacked focus, due mainly, to the painter's tendency to overload all her pigments with body-colour which resulted as well, in spite of a widely-ranged palette, in an over-all tonal monotony. Otherwise the painting was competent. I liked Thurloe Conolly's *Painting*, a (literally) brown study that seems to have grown out of the contemplation of the form of a water-lily. The picture has a richly meditative quality, due, I think, to the narrow limits, tonal and formal, which the painter set himself. Here also, in *The Figurehead*, Elizabeth Rivers shows her growing mastery of bold colour and suggestively abstract form. I liked also, the bright colour of Anne Yeats' *Célimène* and the gaiety of Robert Burke's *Beside the Sea*.

Father Jack Hanlon can occasionally paint a delightful picture as he does here both in *Still Life* (10) and *Plums and Grapes*. But can frequently be shallow and sentimental, naïf in the wrong place and garish in straining after the manner of a French school of which Dufy is perhaps the chief exponent. His best pictures have an engaging lightness and gaiety of colour which fails to support the intention when he strives after a deeper significance as he does in *Madonna and Angels*. He fails altogether when he uses paint solemnly, as he does in *Christ*. I liked his *Punchestown* except for a slight discordance in the tone of the sky, and, in lighter mood, the vivacity of *Hats*.

Oskar Kokoschka, whether he paints portraits or landscapes, or expresses in symbols his feeling about life and history, is predominantly a painter of tremendous vitality who has a direct approach to life. As a painter he has eschewed theory unlike most of his European contemporaries. As he says himself: "I never intended to entertain my contemporaries with the tricks of a juggler, in the hope of being recognised as an original. I simply wanted to create around me a world of my own in which I could survive the progressive disruption going on all over the world." His inclusion, therefore, in the famous Nazi-sponsored Exhibition of Degenerate Art in Munich in 1937 can be attributed to his ideological rather than his technical nonconformity. His chief

development has been from the psychological subtlety of his early portraits in which the painting is tight and the drawing incisive, to a broader, bolder, more objective and colourful vision under the influence of Impressionism. Kokoschka, with a Continental reputation well established before the war, is rapidly and deservedly becoming better known in England and America where, already, he has had several exhibitions. The present volume, excellently produced, is a comprehensive survey of his work as a painter, from 1907 to 1947. It contains forty-eight plates in photogravure, eight excellent reproductions in colour and two original lithographs. Mr. Plaut contributes an informative critical and biographical introduction.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

TASTE AND TECHNIQUE IN BOOK COLLECTING. By John Carter. Cambridge University Press. 15s.

It would be difficult to over-praise this work, but it is necessary at the outset to say what it is and what it is not. Very definitely, it is not a primer; Mr. Carter writes for the sophisticated devotees of what he terms "a fairly sophisticated pursuit." The beginner had better not take it up, but the experienced collector is likely to find it a mine of information and robust commonsense.

Mr. Carter was particularly well equipped for his task. He describes himself, with excessive modesty, as a "professional dealer," but he is much more than that. He earns his livelihood as a buyer in London for an American rare book firm, but he has long ago established himself as a bibliographical expert, and bookselling can, obviously, become a powerful ally of bibliography. Besides, Mr. Carter possesses two other invaluable qualifications: he has the born collector's "nose," which makes him reject the spurious article at sight and which helps him to follow a trail unerringly (witness his detective instinct in the remarkable book which he wrote in collaboration with Mr. Graham Pollard, *An Enquiry into the Nature of Certain Nineteenth Century Pamphlets*); and his literary interests are wide enough to range from the author of the *Religio Medici*—on the text of which he is an unrivalled authority—to A. E. Housman.

In the space at my disposal, I cannot hope to do much more than indicate the ground covered by Mr. Carter in the present treatise. He deals with the origins, history and technique of book-collecting; discusses changing fashions and new trends; clarifies the ever-extending relationships which exist between the collector, the bookseller and the book-auctioneer; and is wise—and, at times, refreshingly heretical—on such topics as "points" and "condition." Often provocative, but never less than stimulating, he delivers some weighty hammer-blows at the fetishes and dogmas that governed collecting—to its grievous detriment—during the "boom" period of the late twenties and he makes a reasoned plea for the establishment and maintenance of saner and healthier standards. Refusing to let convention or rules stifle reason, he hits out

vigorously at such fashions as those which gave the "boards-and-label" book an "irrational supremacy" over a copy in a trade or contemporary binding or which elevated the "misplaced comma" to a position of cardinal importance.

One thing emerges clearly from his book—that the days of the "great" collectors are nearly over. The Big House, the princely income and the leisured life—indispensable to collecting on the grand scale—are disappearing in the Austerity Age. There will be no more Hebers or Millers or Harmsworths on this side of the Atlantic, and perhaps no Huntingdons or Folgers on the other. But, on the other hand, they are likely to be *more* collectors-bibliophiles with smaller purses, more specialised interests and noses just as keen. For these, once they have mastered the elements of what is something of a science as well as an art, Mr. Carter will prove a most instructive and trustworthy guide.

M. J. MACM.

THE FIRM OF CHARLES OTTLEY, LONDON & CO. By John Carter and Graham Pollard. Hart-Davies. 6s.

This is a footnote to the *Enquiry*, in which the writers exposed the Wise forgeries. It deals specifically with a group of four Swinburne pamphlets which were issued with the *Ottley* imprint in 1887, which were supposed to have been sponsored by R. H. Shepherd, one of Swinburne's earliest bibliographers, and which were tentatively characterised as piracies rather than forgeries.

The further examination of these items, here printed, discloses them to be downright forgeries, printed and marketed by Wise. After he had issued them, with the date 1887, a genuine first edition of *A Word for the Navy*, published by George Redway, and dated 1886, turned up. This poem was given in manuscript to George Redway in 1886, and he set up a small number of copies at once, believed to be not more than six, for copyright purposes, printed the poem in an anthology *Sea Song and River Rhyme* in 1887, and reprinted it in the same year in an edition of 250 copies. Messrs. Carter and Pollard have laid bare the whole history of the printing of this poem, and Wise's elaborate attempts to prove the Redway genuine first edition of 1886 to be a fake, so that his own edition of 1887, which was earlier than Redway's 250, might stand.

The pamphlet is a valuable addendum to the *Enquiry* and will interest every bibliographer and literary student. It strengthens the case against Wise, and the urgent need of an expert examination of everything he had to do with. The writers leave no doubt of their view that the motive of gain was more potent in Wise's mind than many bibliographers have been prepared to believe, and that probably more copies of each item were marketed than the colophons admit.

P. S. O'HEGARTY.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE TWILIGHT OF THE IDEAS and Other Essays. By Arland Ussher. With a Preface by John Middleton Murry. The Sandymount Press. Dublin. 6s.

Mr. Ussher in his essays has, to a remarkable degree, fused the rôles of philosopher and artist. The attempt has been conscious: "so long as philosophy *merely* states, neglecting the irrational element of artistic suggestion, it will be not only a 'dull catalogue of common things' but an out-of-date catalogue." The result is a book both brilliant and profound.

He sees in philosophy "the meditation of the mind before the Universe . . . the impulse in turn to create a World—a world in which men can live with their whole emotional and intellectual being, a world in which the antinomies of reason and intuition are (in however arbitrary and provisional a manner) reconciled." It is as if Mr. Ussher were, in terms of the theatre, a producer of the acutest sensitivity and penetration, able unerringly to reveal the essence of a play, and to present it in its fullest implications as a dynamic unity. Read, for example, the short chapter 'Philosophy as Poetry.' "Schopenhauer is a Pagan of the family of Ecclesiastes and Sophocles; his work has the Classic clarity of a single mood without inner tensions, of a single idea without inner contradictions. His entire massive production amounts to no more than one Greek epitaph, for there is properly no actor and no action in his cosmos; no individuality and no history; there is only a patient, the 'Will'—which is the very opposite of a Will. And because there was nothing behind his philosophy but a mood it has left nothing but a fragrance, called esthetic nihilism; a heavy narcotic which has already begun to travel from the mind of our society to the members." Again, "Nietzsche praises not only 'hammer-hardness' but 'the divinity of the beholder'; the bubble of illusion which we have seen turn into the bullet of the Idea becomes in his philosophy a glistening jewel . . . Nietzsche's philosophy (a mere adumbration, because the time for it had not come) is not a representation of the imprisoned self or the dynamic Idea of the Good, but of a personal universe and a universal person—a play and a protagonist in which the weary poet may lose himself and find peace."

Mr. Ussher believes the only hope—lucky chance, rather—in our situation to be the appearance of intellectual aristocrats. "Finally the completely free man or intellectual aristocrat cuts the last abstract leading-string. He comes out of the dolls-house cosmos of ideals, and can quit the circular race-track where he chased so long after those wearisome mechanical hares—God, Liberty, Justice, and Truth." In his further description, the stress is on detachment, "direct artistic perception," aloofness—"Our masters, the mobs, will do the loving and hating for us—especially the hating; and if we do not disentangle the love-knot the communist will simply burst it." He suggests: "As Classical and Christian philosophy made of the savage a citizen, even so it is for modern poetry and art to work the second but bitterly-needed conversion, and make of the citizen an aristocrat."

Mr. Ussher, is, of course, the first to draw attention to some apparent contradictions in his book, but they are the frank, if sometimes wilful, gesture of an unusually flexible mind. For here are the wryness of a Sartre, Lao Tse's 'poised

between contraries,' a transmuted dialecticism: "The desirable life is a life of the greatest possible psychological differentiation, together with the swiftest possible psychological alternation; so that any state of mind instantly receives its corrective, and, as with the colours in the solar light, the combined effect is one of simple charity"; and much else that is rich and incisive.

M. Gabriel Marcel in his recent "The Philosophy of Existence" writes: "Each one of us becomes the centre of a sort of mental space arranged in concentric zones of decreasing interest and participation. It is as though each one of us secreted a kind of shell which gradually hardened and imprisoned him; and this sclerosis is bound up with the hardening of the categories in accordance with which we conceive and evaluate the world." It is not the least stimulating quality of Mr. Ussher's book that there is so little—to quote M. Marcel again—of "the crystallised pattern of our personal system." He is conscious of separation from "our Christian fathers and Classical forefathers," and is intent on our escaping the miasma of their ideals, even if our escape is to the situation of the Beggar of Baghdad—"to-day a king, to-morrow no such matter." And yet he finely acknowledges his debt to them in his metaphors: "For there are always two tragic figures cheek by cheek with the eternally-crucified Present—they are those evasive and shadowy sinners, the Past and the Future. To the Past, the Present speaks forgiveness—the forgiveness which is implied in knowing and taking up into conceptual oneness; the Future can neither repent nor be forgiven, because its face is turned away—yet without its wilfulness neither Past nor Present could exist."

The Twilight of the Ideas is a book for those interested in the trend of distinguished contemporary European thought.

SAMUEL PALMER: THE VISIONARY YEARS. By Geoffrey Grigson. Kegan Paul. Two Guineas net.

Let us be bold about it. Samuel Palmer is one of the most remarkable figures in the history of Art in England since the late Middle Ages. For like Blake he shared with certain artists of the 16th-century (in Mr. Grigson's phrase) "a vision of two worlds at once." Nor was it this mystical bi-focalism which alone made him the great artist he was. For he was, besides this, a poet (as startlingly vivid as Sydney Dobell at his best), a letter-writer with an astonishing gift for the lightning-flash phrase, a symbolist and mystic of considerably more flaming intensity than his friend Edward Calvert about whom W. B. Yeats once planned a book.

Fifty-six years ago Palmer's son, A. H. Palmer, produced a biography: since then—until Mr. Grigson—the published material about Samuel Palmer has consisted entirely of magazine articles and stray references in books about Blake of whom he has too often and too glibly been described as a "follower." So that it has been left to Mr. Grigson to produce what must remain the most definitive life of Palmer—at least of his "Visionary Years," spent at Shoreham, Kent, between 1827 and 1835—we are likely to have in this generation. As a biography, lit with sympathy and a glowing understanding of its subject's spiritual struggles it is unlikely to be surpassed; while its bibliography, complete catalogue of Palmer's work between the years 1812-1835, and 68 reproductions

in both colour and black-and-white render it indispensable to all students of Palmer's work.

Tucking it away in his final footnote, Mr. Grigson puts forward what might be described as his major thesis—which fits not only Palmer but Blake (I fancy) and many others of their time:

One could draw up a curious list of poets and painters born on either flank of 1800—it would include not only Clare and Palmer, but Beddoes, von Holst, Darley, Hartley Coleridge, A. W. Pugin, C. J. Wells—who managed to make no satisfactory bridge from the old world into the new. I recommend Mr. Grigson's study of Palmer to any novelist—with a feeling for the period is the strict proviso—in search of a theme. Put badly in a sentence or two, it would be the story of an artist, a poet manqué, who had, as a youth, caught the visionary flame from the ageing Blake and for ten years painted and drew with the same visionary fierceness. And then—at the age of thirty—the candle began slowly flickering out. A visit to Italy, marriage to a totally unsuitable and puritanical wife, a bickering life in "a prim Surrey villa," a complete inability to adjust himself to contemporary notions and ways of living and he becomes (in Mr. Grigson's phrase) "peculiar and ineffectual, a disappointed, persecuted eccentric," outliving his "visionary" period by some forty years. There would be my novel—and against *what* a background! There—in outline—was Palmer's life.

Palmer himself has given us a clue to his early spiritual strivings, as well as to much of his "visionary" painting. Describing the debt he owed to his old nurse, he wrote:—

When less than four years old, as I was standing with her, watching the shadows on the wall from the branches of an elm behind which the moon had risen, she transferred and fixed the fleeting image in my memory by repeating the couplet:

Vain man, the vision of a moment made,
Dream of a dream and shadow of a shade.

I never forgot these shadows, and am often trying to paint them.

As an artist, the boy was a prodigy. He was exhibiting at the British Institution when he was fourteen, at the Royal Academy when he was fifteen. But it was not until he was nineteen that there occurred the great event of his life, his meeting with Blake to whom he was introduced by that strange warped creature John Linnell who was to become his father-in-law and the torment of his later years. (What a study for your novelist!). Palmer's description of that meeting with Blake and his wife in their lodgings in Fountain Court is too well-known for quotation in full. Blake was sitting up in bed, "lame of a scalded foot." Sixty-seven years old yet "hard-working on a bed covered with books sat he up like one of the Antique patriarchs, or a dying Michael Angelo." With "fearfulness" did the young Palmer show the old patriarch his "first essays in design" and received from him "sweet encouragement." Thus began a strange friendship which was to last for the remaining three years of Blake's life.

By the time he was twenty Palmer had taken courage to obey his visions. Writing of a commission he had just executed, he recorded in his diary: "It was given me this morning to see that I had done wrong in seeking for Mr. Bennett's pictures, visions more consonant with common nature than those I received, at

my first regeneration, from the Lord. I will no more, by God's grace, seek to moderate for the sake of pleasing men." That year an art critic writing of Palmer's landscapes in the Academy declared: "We feel the most intense curiosity to see what manner of man it was who produced such performances. We think if he would show himself with a label round his neck, 'The Painter of *A View in Kent*,' he would make something of it at a shilling a head." The "excess," preached by Blake, had set in, and was to dominate him for ten miraculous years.

Mr. Grigson has added an amusing—and enlightening—chapter to the social history of the early eighteen hundreds in his account of the "Palmer Circles" which included Edward Calvert, Henry Walter, F. O. Finch, Frederick Tatham and George Richmond. They were a group of neo-mediaevalists, pre-Pre-Raphaelites, and, as Calvert declared, "brothers in Art, brothers in Love, and brothers in all that for which Love and Art subsist—the Ideal—the Kingdom within." For your novelist the principal character among these would be the apostate, George Richmond, who was at Blake's deathbed and actually closed Blake's eye, yet was able to record in his diary forty years later: "Total earned this year £3,469 14s. 6d., the largest income I have ever made." Richmond, as you have guessed, was the sort of man who cultivated the right friends—at the right time.

Mr. Grigson never lets us forget that Palmer, besides being a mystic and a visionary painter, was a man with what amounted to a passion for roast goose and an equally rich taste in humour. When he and his father, the retired London bookseller, moved to Shoreham in Samuel's twenty-first year, he tells us, "The people of the Village could not make out what we were after, for we walked much in the deep Twilight, and into the Night, so 'Astrologers' seemed the most likely, and so I believed we were dubbed . . ." The letters of Palmer's quoted in this book are among the liveliest in a period of lively letters, and unlike the correspondence of most artists they have length, glorious twelve-page length, as well as depth. For these alone Mr. Grigson's biography is worth acquiring.

H. L. M.

A NOTEBOOK ON WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE. By Edith Sitwell. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. Price: 15s.

Dr. Edith Sitwell has in common with the Elizabethans a delight in verbal subtlety and richness; but where they regarded Shakespeare's plays as direct dramatic experiences, she gives little emphasis to the stagecraft, considering rather the inner poetic experience.

"One, two, three; Time, time !

and almost as Iachimo's dark voice ceased, Time is abolished and we fall into a dreamless sleep amid the night airs. Then even the flickering taper, and its little movement that seems as if it were about to change into a sound, is gone, and we waken to find that the dark and faintly lightening, exquisite night-music has flown, and that we are listening to the sound of fluttering wings wet with dew, to the sound of the music that the clownish Cloten has brought into Imogen's antechamber."

Unconcerned with interpretation on the plane of psychological naturalism,

'A Notebook on William Shakespeare' is the commentary of a poet, and a poet, moreover, with an extraordinarily sensitive ear for prosody, a tactile awareness of sound. It may seem, sometimes, that she does not note sufficiently the subjective and associative elements in prosodic effects.

"For instance, in the line

And fill me from the Crowne to the Toe, top-full

'full' is a darkened dissonance to 'fill'—and these dissonances, put at opposite ends of the line,—together with the particular placing of the alliterative f's of 'fill' and 'full' and alliterative t's, and the rocking up and down of the dissonantal o's ('Crowne,' 'Toe,' 'top') show us a mind reeling on the brink of madness, about to topple down into those depths, yet striving to retain its balance." Or again, where she comments on Lady Macbeth's speech:

Peace !

It was the Owle that shriek'd, the fatall Bell-man,
Which gives the stern'st good-night.

"Here we actually feel the silence of the night, broken by that long flame of a voice, like a torch held by a Fury before the destruction of a world is begun. That voice, pausing, as it seems, for ever on the long sound of 'Peace' (a word that has the high doom-haunted tone of the owl's shriek), echoes, in a straight line, down all the corridors of the Dead."

But this is a minor point. The completeness of her response to great poetry gives to her interpretations the significance that seems an integral part of the poetic and dramatic structure of the plays. She says, for example: "Certain characters in Shakespeare have the grandeur and loneliness of a pariah sun in a heaven of evil, casting down disastrous rays upon all alike, breeding new forms of life from primeval mud." Of Desdemona: "Sometimes the very sound of her voice will bring a faint echo of that of her beloved Othello:

OTHELLO

Ah ! Desdemona; away, away, away !

DESEMONA

Alas, the heavy day !—Why do you weep ?

An echo, more than a rhyme; and one deep in her heart, as the echoing sound lies deep in the line."

Of Titania's speech beginning:

Feede him with Apricockes and Dewberries,

she comments: "Here, there is a wonderful movement, as if faint moonlight and dew were being woven into a texture on a shuttle of the summer airs. The change from '*honic-bags*' to '*humble-Bees*' in line 3 gives a faint velvetiness to the texture, like the coat of the bees. In the last line, all has become dim, with the smaller e's."

S. L. Bethell, in his book 'Shakespeare and the Popular Dramatic Tradition,' states: "The greatest contribution to Shakespearean criticism has not, in fact, come from the specialists, but from those general critics who have taught us to take his poetry seriously, and to realise that, in Shakespeare, poetry and drama are not separable ingredients, but that the drama is a poetic creation, existing in the poetry like a Thomist *universale in re*. That sentence might fairly be applied to Dr. Sitwell's book as a description of its aims and achievement.

ANTHOLOGY OF CONTEMPORARY LATIN-AMERICAN POETRY. Edited by Dudley Fitts. The Falcon Press. 21s. net.

The aim of this anthology according to its tireless editor, Dudley Fitts, is to serve as an "introductory survey to Latin-American poetry since the death in 1916, of Ruben Darío." This in itself is a prodigious undertaking but in addition the editor gives translations of the Spanish, Portuguese and French into English for comparison with the originals. The editor has insisted on strict adherence to the text even to the point, as he says himself, of ruining some of his colleagues' best efforts by this insistence on literal translations. At the same time he hopes to have avoided the Scylla of crib translations of the classics. This is, on the whole, a wise decision when a large body of work is involved in which some form of uniformity of presentation is necessary.

The inspired translation that mirrors the poem is necessarily a personal miracle, and like all miracles, cannot be compelled. Spender's selected translations of Lorca are both faithful to the original as well as beautiful in their own right, but obviously much of Lorca's work defeats this mirror image and forced into foreign dress would only be deformed. The gifted translator picks only that which he can make his own and clothe in suitable language, otherwise if he tries to render a poem, he either uses the original as a spring board for his own phantasy, or even goes further as Lockhart did, when he interpolated much dreary moralising into the barbaric splendour of the mediaeval "romances."

Has Dudley Fitts' decision solved the difficult problem of mass translation? He himself admits that many poems have defied even literal translation and he has had perforce to omit them, for instance, Vicente Huidobro's "Altazar." Granted all this, there still remains the "imponderable." Can English ears accept, however apposite, the American usage of English? Such translations as the following will make the purist shudder and provoke our learned judges to clarification. "Me gusta verla en la tarde," "it makes me feel good to see her." And in the same poem by Constantino Suasnavar, "vos no sos más que jayán," "you're just a big dope." Pequeño Larousse acknowledges "jayán" as "hombre robusto y poco inteligente." Our ears would be assuaged with the old word "dolt," which is perhaps the pilgrim ancestor of the American word, which for us, has not shed its de Quincey trappings so far removed from the simple hand's serenade to his "boss," I beg your pardon for this infectious American, I mean, his master's daughter.

Again from the French of Jacques Roumain I do not like "troubled" as a translation of "l'onde troublée." It may be an American equivalent, it is not an English one where it means "disturbed," not necessarily unpleasantly. "L'ancien mirage se lève au creux de la nuit." "The old mirage rises from the pit of the night." This line in French echoes Omar Khayyám's "bowl of night" but the translation "gets me" (there I go again!) frankly, in the stomach.

Darío is dead—long live Darío! Man always kills the thing he loves—naturally enough since it distracts him from his own narcississim, so not only the aristocrat of poetry but his elegant swan were loaded into the tumbrils of South American resurgence. Enrique González Martínez is the official executioner in his "Tuércele el cuello al cisne." Vigourously he wrings the swan's neck but is there a derisive echo from the cosmopolitan Darío that Verlaine has done this better "Prends l'éloquence et tords-lui son cou . . ." But then Paris had

been his spiritual home. Martinez proposed instead the wise owl (I don't like "sapient") without grace, staring through the shadows, "who interprets the mysterious book of the silent night." The night may be silent but alas! I am afraid this owl has inadvertently hatched many parrots, gay plumaged, exotic, interesting but full of stale and undisciplined echoes to the more mature western world.

Colour, like patriotism, is not enough: it must have an underlying tenseness of thought or emotion to last. This is where the attractive Nicolas Guillen fails. His "Wake for Papa Montero," has something of the colour of Lorca's "Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías" but the underlying sound of the relentless knell is absent.

Cesar Tiempo (Israel Zeitlin) is given considerable space. His work is full of violence: to quote the bibliography "he couches his social protest in bitter apocalyptic language and he attacks in particular the blindness and pretentiousness of his fellow Jews." He was born in Russia in 1900 and the last date of his publications is given as 1938. I give the date because from a world point of view these diatribes can only be excused as juvenilia and perhaps he has matured since then.

Alfonsina Storini's "Mundo de Siete Pozos" pleased me very much with its beautiful sense of anatomy and race embryology. The translation is happy.

"And the other two doors:

The antennae huddled
in the catacombs that lead in from the ears;
wells of sound,
pearly shells where echo
the word expressed
and the unexpressed;
tubes placed to right and left
that the sea never be hushed,
and that the mechanical pavilion of the worlds
may be filled with murmurs."

But out of nearly a hundred songsters it is not fair to select at random from this carefully housed aviary. Dudley Fitts has done his job magnificently and the book is well produced. Perhaps some of his more ugly ducklings may yet moult into the true descendants of the slaughtered swan.

ETHNA MACCARTHY.

FIFTY ROMANCE LYRIC POEMS. Chosen and Translated by Richard Aldington.
Allan Wingate. London. 10s. 6d. net.

When Richard Aldington edited and contributed to the Poets Translation Series of Greek and Latin poets, about twenty-five years ago, he strongly advocated prose translation of poetry rather than the distortion it so often suffers in the hands of what he called "clumsy metrists." This attitude was a natural rebel's comprehensible reaction to the many Victorian verse translations by scholarly persons scantily endowed with poetic taste. A poem, however, consists of form as well as content, music as well as subject, and to make a successful metrical version in another language is a far more difficult task than to make a prose translation. When the translator is a poet himself as well as being in

temperamental harmony with the poet he is translating—for example, the Horace of Sir Edward Marsh—the aesthetic effect on the reader is infinitely more exhilarating than a prose translation would be.

The poems in this book are chosen from Provençal, Italian, and early French, between the years, 1071-1655, with the prose translations facing the originals. Mr. Aldington says modestly in his preface "The translations may be looked upon as a small collection of picture-postcards of works of art, such as most of us bring back from a trip on the Continent of Europe. But luckily, in this case, I can supply you with the originals as well . . . My worst fear is that in trying to interpret these poems and to win them new readers I may only have succeeded in harming them." This he does not do, for his prose is lucid, rhythmic, and often poetic, for example, these lines from an anonymous Provençal Romance:

"She rode upon a mule; its shoes were of silver and gilded was the saddle; behind her on the crupper she had set three rose-bushes to shade her.

She rode across the meadows; a knight met and fairly greeted her. 'Fair Lady, where were you born?' 'I am the praise of France, of the highest rank.

The nightingale is my father, who sings upon the bough in the highest tree. The siren is my mother, who sings on the highest rock by the salt sea."

The selection from the Troubadour poets is admirable, particularly the anonymous Romances and Pastorals from Karl Bartsch's collection. In the Italian section, there are poems by Guido Cavalcanti, Petrarch, Lorenzo de Medici, Politian and others. The Italian poetess Gaspara Stampa (1523-1554) wrote with an intensity of feeling reminiscent of her French contemporary Louise Labé. The prose renderings of Charles d'Orléans, Marot, Ronsard and Du Bellay fall a trifle flat, since so many excellent verse translations have been done of these poets. Many more people can read the French of the *Pléiade* than can read the Provençal of Peire Vidal, or the Italian of Cavalcanti. The chief value of the book lies in the fact that anyone who possesses even a smattering of Provençal or Italian will find it possible to read these poems in the original with the aid of the accurate and lucid translations. Each group of poems is preceded by a short biographical note, written with true scholarship, but also possessing an insight and vitality only possible to one who has lived with, and understood with a fellow poet's sympathy, these ancient poets.

MONA GOODEN.

REFLECTIONS ON OUR AGE. Lectures given at the Opening Session of UNESCO at the Sorbonne University, Paris. Introduction by David Hardman, M.P. Allan Wingate. 18s.

Stephen Spender, in his very able foreword to this volume, explains that the lectures are "roughly divided into those in which intellectuals, such as J. P. Sartre, Pierre Bertaux, and A. J. Ayer, express their attitudes towards problems confronting them in their work as writers, philosophers and teachers today; and those more closely concerned with education, science and culture What is most valuable here is the free expression of the attitudes of independent intellectual workers towards an intellectual organisation. For ultimately this organisation—UNESCO—will depend on independent minds having a critical

attitude towards it . . . and part of its task should be to bridge the gap between the specialist working in his separate field, and the ordinary people who need science, education and culture, ministered in the interests of the whole world, without which there can be no peace."

The lectures themselves are so outstanding that one is tempted to quote extensively. For example, there is E. Mounier's "Hence it is not enough to speak of our chaos. Our terror today is also a terrified awe in the face of this divine power, this supreme artifice that has been given us of being able to use destruction to defeat our artifice swiftly, while our wisdom is still panting to catch up with it. From now on nihilism is not merely the rowdiest of the philosophies: it is armed"; Bertaux's insistence that a new type of intellectual—one involved in action—is needed. "To be right is not enough"; and Sartre's "the problem which the writer has to solve for himself and to make clear to others is the problem of the relation between the end and the means."

There are contributions on the influence of Arab Civilisation, on Indian, Spanish and Greek culture. Especially moving are the concluding words of the Greek poet, Soloris Skipis: "I am proud to be speaking for her (Greece) today, and I ask the United Nations and the Big Four to do justice to her claims—such small claims as they are—and to allow her to breathe a little, to regain the serenity of her soul, so that she can astound the world once more with beauty and nobility in every sphere of human activity." The section on Science is noteworthy not only for the masterly resumé and explanations, but also for breadth of vision.

As Stephen Spender points out, most of the contributors confidently believe that their intellectual activities can help carry out the purpose of UNESCO; and there is one contributor, W. G. Carr, to discipline their dreams and rigorously to prune their enthusiasms: "The purpose of UNESCO is not to increase or to disseminate knowledge for its own sake, or to preserve and protect for its own sake the knowledge that men have won in the past. The purpose of UNESCO is to use, protect, increase and disseminate the education and culture and science which can be reasonably expected to contribute significantly to peace and security."

THE PHILOSOPHY OF DECADENTISM. A Study of Existentialism. By Norberto Bobbio. Translated by David Moore. Basil Blackwell. Oxford. Price: 5s.

This small book by Norberto Bobbio, Professor of Legal Philosophy in the University of Padua and Editor of the *Rivista di Filosofia*, is so rich in content that the brief summary of his thought here attempted is without any claim to do it justice.

After tracing the sources of, and defining, our present crisis, Bobbio shows how nineteenth century idealism and positivism were manifested in art as romanticism and realism. As man found himself by turns more or less than man, the sense of crisis emerged. Where this crisis was exalted, decadentism resulted and finally contaminated orthodox philosophy—its medium being existentialism, which "counters hope with despair." Decadentism is defined as the fruit of culture in dissolution, scepticism as the fruit of an exuberant culture, and activism as decadentism applied to action. Existentialism is unintelligible

save in terms of Romantic thought. "The superman of Nietzsche opens the way to the anguished being of Heidegger or the self-centred existence of Jaspers."

Then follows a more detailed examination revealing the decadent atmosphere of existentialism with its three fundamental motifs in Heidegger and Jaspers: anti-naturalism, symbolism and Hermeticism. Through Hermeticism, "the existential philosophy becomes part of the atmosphere of post-Romantic decadentism."

The morality and amorality of existentialism are discussed and this leads to a consideration of "the theme of commonplaceness and appealing for a break with the world of fixed and crystallized laws (in which) Heidegger and Jaspers unite in the realization of a decadentistic morality." Their common love of the exceptional is a "belated revival of the Romantic cult of the hero" but their human patterns "in face of the tasks which the crisis indicates to us, are lifeless puppets." The self-estrangement implicit in Heidegger and Jaspers is a retreat from the social sense "that provides the basis for the construction of new ideas and new works, from which men look to the redemption that will be the expiation of the crisis." He urges that "the value of the person is no longer a gift, but an attainment, and man is not a person in the closed circle of his individuality, but becomes a person in the society of other men." It is shown that unlike Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Jaspers does recognize "the value of the presence of one's neighbour" but only "for the purposes of existential clarification."

The conclusion is that existentialism "is the philosophy of a worn-out generation" having much in common with Roman Stoicism and Epicureanism. He ends: "And what else is the man whom existentialism portrays but a ghost that moves about amid the shadows—because he is a shadow himself—and does not fear death, but rather faces it unflinchingly, because he is himself already dead? For a world of dead men, a philosophy of ghosts." There is an appendix to the book on 'The Decadentism of Sartre.' Bobbio sees him as "the perfect incarnation of the decadent intellectual" and demonstrates that his work shows that "lack of correspondence or balance between the objective and subjective limits of art which is a characteristic of any decadent literature."

'The Philosophy of Decadentism' merits the closest study. As an arraignment of the motif of "man's inadequacy in the face of the world" by its brilliant analysis of Heidegger, Jaspers and Sartre, and its anatomical and historical examination of existentialism, it is of considerable importance alike to the intellectual and to the plain reader who has been defeated by what Professor Joad has roundly called a "pretentious farrago of metaphysical abracadabra."

PILLARS TO REMEMBRANCE. By John Redwood Anderson. Oxford University Press. London. 10s. 6d.

This latest book by Mr. Anderson comes to emphasise the view that any unprejudiced reader with standards and values in poetry must have reached while reading the author's two recent works, *Triptych* and *Paris Symphony*, that here is a poet whose equipment is twofold, as it ought to be; a blend of intellect and imagination. Without the second of these possessions he would be, at best, an intellectualist in verse, which is, perhaps, the most generous estimate that can possibly be made of certain of his contemporaries, especially one who,

in a literary weekly, has exposed himself as no poet at all by publishing some unintelligible lines beginning—

All alone from his dark sanctum the lingam fronts, affronts the sea,
The world's dead weight of breakers against sapling, bull and candle

Where worship comes no more

and following up with something about "that thronging gonging mirage of paddy and toddy and dung and this unhabited shore."

Whatever the Decadents of France may have led Arthur Symons to say, intelligibility, if not simplicity, is still necessary to poetry, although we may no longer be required to read our compositions, minstrel-fashion, aloud. It is again Mr. Anderson's triumph that along with his impressive background of a vast acquaintance with science and history, philosophy and the arts, he retains a clarity of expression that leaves the audience with a sense of artistic fulfilment, the consequence of immediate and lasting delight at being able to share the vision of life offered in lyrical language by a man of our own mid-twentieth century who has survived to middle age as all men of sensibility trust they will survive—"one full pulse of joy in that unwearied Joyousness" "old, yet young with youth to cloud the very dawn with envy!" These are Mr. Anderson's own phrases, used about Earth, but we ourselves may become entitled to them. "And how her laughter goes rippling in the extravagance of flowers!" So he writes in one of his best poems, *Anima Mundi*, and human joy echoes that laughter:

Now fly from every hawthorn, red and white
the bannerettes of Spring—
fly, red and white, as are the morning's flags !

Anima Mundi is a characteristic example of the thirty poems included in *Pillars to Remembrance*. "I will plant pillars to remembrance" is a prefatory quotation from *Radha*, and Mr. Anderson remembers his friends, including Walter de la Mare, John Cowper Powys, Wilfrid Gibson and many others to whom individual pieces are dedicated; also the late Lascelles Abercrombie, the loss of whom a few years ago has inspired an elegy, *My Friend is Dead*. This elegy is reprinted here and possesses a dignity and eloquence unequalled since Matthew Arnold. Again the poet's love of Earth and the lovely things of Earth is revealed, and the charm and daintiness of his pictures can be felt in flashing phrases—"hedge-rows fledged for spring" as well as in flowing passages:—

. . . of late May-ploughings, where the white
flights of the wild gull slant in light;
. . . of summer harvests rolled
in cataracts and lakes of gold;
of stubble-fields, like sheets of bronze
burnished in rich September's suns;
and winter, when the long lines flow
of hill and hollow hushed in snow . . .

These "pictures of earth" illumine in a new, blushed light the already poignant magnificence of the Abercrombie memorial. Mr. Anderson's technique now moves crystal-clearly, conspicuously free from his earlier mannerisms, mainly due to exuberance, and many and many a line catches the breath with happy

surprise. Whether his poem is a dramatic monologue, as in the case of the vibrant and imaginative *Two Kings*, an ode, or a quiet piece such as *Nostalgias*, we receive it with an eagerness and confidence that are a refreshing change from the assumed sophistication which a reader needs if he is to cope with the critical, cynical, overrated pomposities of fashionable verse to-day—the literary bane and a negation of true poetry.

THOMAS MOULT.

MEREDITH. By Siegfried Sassoon. Constable. 15s.

In this age of the common man, who is more planned against than planning, it is not too easy a task to write an appreciation of an unacknowledged legislator like George Meredith. Mr. Sassoon has done the job well.

“Now when one really hates gold one is at war with one’s fellows.” Meredith was always at war, and liked it.

Contemporary English criticism seems to be concerned with questions as to whether Meredith’s prose work is being read to-day or will be read to-morrow. And whether, if he lived now, he would be the ‘optimist’ he was, or shrink into the mere ‘pessimist’ of our present epoch.

Can we moderns answer such questions? Meredith was a giant; we are pigmies. He was a fastidious aristocrat; we are proud to call ourselves ‘democrats.’ He hated the furtive and brutal despotism of Enthroned Usury, and warned England against this greatest of destructive forces. The age of audacious modernity, of beautiful frankness (especially in sex) of great social experiment and equal chances for all, leaves the poet in the gutter and the credit-manipulator safe in the arms of Croesus. Base mechanics totter from the conveyor-belt to a couch at the cinema, all being equal in the sight of Bevan.

But would the sight of such things have diminished the fighting force of George Meredith? Surely not. The word ‘pessimist,’ outside its philosophic usage, is merely a synonym for ‘coward’ and of Meredith we can say confidently: never a braver spirit tried to steer humanity.

Meredith was a warrior of the spirit. He would not have been content to see patriotic youth reach for a rifle every twenty years, and lay down their lives in “avoidable” wars. He wanted conscription in England, to stop European conflict, not to extend it to a global struggle, without real cause and without decision.

He sang of what Woman might become, in dignity, in wit and grace, in companionship with men. One doubts if he wished his Dianas to hunt jobs in office and factory, abandoning, and so destroying the home, in order to find equality with men—in their drudgery and ignoble amusements.

He also warned against a fragmentary science that “was to polish man off the face of the globe!” Such a poet is ever the enemy of merely quantitative conceptions, and he will submit to discipline and regimentation only for a great and worthy struggle, not for a problematical ‘economic security.’ He despised the politician, ‘vocal above the common pitch’; and he distrusted, as well he might “our grangousier public.” With his subtle perceptions, “he heard the sound of the shuttle of deceit without seeing it.”

No, Meredith was never likely to turn ‘pessimist.’ He was too much the born fighter; he saw ultimate causes too clearly; he extended his faculties so bravely to the uttermost joyous pitch. If the youth he loved and fought for

cannot, to-day, read this lord of language, then *tant pis* for modern youth. If the women for whom he struck such valiant blows turn from him now, so much the worse for their womanhood.

"We are betrayed by what is false within." One of our greatest lived for most of his life unheeded. He ruined health and shortened existence, by writing 'three-decker,' novels for the subscription libraries, and by drudgery for publishers—"overworked and underpaid." But George Meredith is a living challenge to the spirit of this uneasy age, even more than to his own. "We are bondsmen to his ashes." Let us heed him and he will "spread gold-leaf over the days to come." We have but to rise to his fierce and splended vision and measure ourselves against his magnificent 'optimism—if we dare.

M. C.

THE WHITE GODDESS. By Robert Graves. Faber and Faber. 30s.

As Francis Bacon says, introducing his *Wisdom of the Ancients*, 'The antiquities of the first age (except those we find in Sacred Writ) were buried in oblivion and silence; silence was succeeded by poetical fables; and fables were again followed by the records we now enjoy. So that the mysteries and secrets of antiquity were distinguished and separated from the records and evidences of succeeding times by the veil of fiction which interposed itself and came between those things which perished and those which are extant.' It seems, however, that nothing truly perishes.

The White Goddess cannot be read as a fable or history: one must resign oneself to study and concentration. The learned excavator shows us what he has brought to the surface, pieces together the fragments, corrects the text where it has become corrupt—purposing to contrive a sound and reasonable whole. Only the philologist can question his verbal implementing and emendation. But, allowing the author's premisses, the arguments are put clearly, and the variety of images, bright and dark, that we are all the time disentangling from the mists of time, under his good guidance, keep us perpetually entertained. Since Memory is mother of the Muses, we can travel backwards with the author through that enchanted jungle of myth and mystery, assured that our journey will not be in vain.

The origin of art is worship; poetry began in the magic language of religion. We are given the origin and development of the god Apollo, with a great deal of humour, in a phrase. Ourselves and our Now are summed up in another amusing phrase, but here the humour is more grim.

Mr. Graves starts out to elucidate the ancient Welsh myth of The Battle of the Trees. This battle was occasioned by a lapwing, a roebuck, and a whelp from the Underworld. Having put in order the jumbled up jig-saw of the original—he establishes that it is really The Battle of the Books, and concerned with an ecclesiastical dispute. The suggestion is amusing, that the reason for the deliberate obscurity of these early Welsh poems may be that the bards were obliged to make their meaning dark, in order to escape ecclesiastical censorship! Ben Jonson tells us, in a short preface to *Discoveries*, that the ancients gave the name of Sylvae—Timber Trees—to books of theirs in which small works of various and diverse matter were promiscuously brought together. Mr. Graves shows us that trees mean letters, in all Celtic languages—that the druidic colleges were founded in woods or groves, and that many of their mysteries made use of

twigs. Later, he answers convincingly the question: 'Why Dog?—Why Roebuck?—Why Lapwing?'

We learn some interesting things about Ogham writing. This had evidently been kept a close secret by the Druids—and was, he suggests, based upon a sort of deaf-and-dumb language—the number of strokes inscribed representing the position of the digit to be used—the position of the stroke suggesting the part of the finger to be touched.

Even if one is not disposed to follow the author's argument with enthusiasm, there are many images in the book to delight. The heron, or crane, having speared fish in the river to bring home to its young, arranges them first in a circle on the strand, with the tails towards the centre. This suggests a wheel, formerly the symbol of the sun.

He quotes for us:

The crane must aye
Take nine steps ere shee flie.

This also has a mystical significance.

He tells us, on the authority of Pausanias, of spotted fish that sang like thrushes. Well, have we not singing fish, in Lough na Hannagain? The alder branch is a token of resurrection, since its buds are set in a spiral. You spit beans at a ghost if you wish it to disappear. Indeed, beans are steeped in magic. He thinks this may be because 'the bean grows spirally up its prop, portending resurrection.'

There is much in the book to delight the lover of trees. 'Burn not the willow, a tree sacred to poets.' According to Culpeper's *Complete Herbal*, 'the Moon owns it.'

Mr. Graves certainly takes us on a far, far journey through the backward and abyss of time, for 'the rediscovery of the lost rudiments, and of the active principles of poetic magic that govern them.'

BLANAID SALKELD.

SHADOWS OF ECSTASY. By Charles Williams. Faber & Faber Ltd. Price: 8s. 6d.

The theme of this book is messianic, the kingdom is that of the imagination. Against an intensely subjective landscape the battle is waged between those who cry of the unknown:

I will encounter darkness as a bride
And hug it in mine arms.

and those who believe that "Darkness was to be exiled, not embraced; and when, as in the hour of death, it could no longer be exiled, it should be received with a proud and courteous if constrained hostility."

One can state the plot briefly: the coming of the messiah with his message of lordship over life and death, his disciples and his enemies, his victories and his betrayal, his death and his faithful disciple's expectancy: "If, first among his peers, when all believed him lost, he thrust himself from the place of shades back into immortal and transmuted life, if he held death at his disposal, if he knew how the vivid ecstasy of experience dominated all shapes and forms, all accidents of time and place. If he came now, humming those last songs which the greatest of the poets had made from his own vision of Ariel flying free,

smiling at the blindness of extreme pain and paralysis of extreme possession, guardian of myths and expositor of power . . . if he returned." But this gives no idea of the book's subtlety: the awareness of simultaneous layers of experience and dimensions of time; the integrity; nor of the unemphatic second theme which infuses a greater richness into the major one of exultant victory—the words of the disciple's wife to the messiah: "But those that die may be lordlier than you: they are obedient to defeat. Can you live truly till you have been quite defeated? You talk of living by your hurts, but perhaps you avoid the utter hurt that's destruction."

The remarkable qualities of the work of the late Charles Williams are badly served by the dust-jacket that says of the standard edition of his novels: "The series will be welcomed by all connoisseurs of the 'grotesque and arabesque,' of ghost stories and supernatural thrillers."

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. *A Revaluation*. By David Daiches. (William MacLellan: 7s. 6d.)

This little book is written in a scholarly style and with acute critical insight. Whilst appealing to all lovers of the dashing R. L. S., it is a particularly interesting study of Stevenson's growth, from 'sedulous ape' and moralistic essayist, to the mature (though, alas! dying) author of *Weir of Hermiston*.

Your born storyteller retains always his childhood's vivid memories and a certain adolescent touch. He begins by producing the romantic 'yarn' in which fortuitous adventures merely happen to 'heroes' (and 'villians'), character analysis being less important than excitement and sheer pace. If, however, the storyteller 'has something to say,' if he matures as an artist, then he proceeds from mere narration of casual adventure to—in Mr. Daiches's words—"events arising out of the compulsion of character."

This book is a fascinating examination of those forces that, working within the soul of R. L. S. brought him to serenity, poise and considerable literary achievement. Incidentally, Mr. Daiches would be the man to write an illuminating essay on our modern detective-story writers, unhappy virtuosos, who, whatever their cash-profits, remain the despised and rejected of contemporary criticism.

M. C.

SAMUEL BUTLER. By P. N. Furbank. Cambridge University Press. Price: 6s.

Mr. Furbank's essay, which was awarded the Le Bas prize at Cambridge in 1946, is a reassessment of Butler as man and writer. A major consideration is Malcolm Muggeridge's version of Butler's personality; this, Mr. Furbank very ably refutes by demonstrating that what he considers to be the falsification and vulgarity of Muggeridge's portrait "lies in the failure to see that what distinguishes the course taken in Butler by that combat between discordant selves with which we are familiar is the violent, almost heroic, self-preservative force which it brought out in him." Butler wrote in his Notebook: "I had to steal my own birthright"; and from this and other disclosures, and bearing in mind that his life "should be seen as a sharp and heroic resistance to a nearly mortal illness followed by a restoration to an inevitably low and never quite secure state of health," Mr. Furbank shows persuasively how logical were Butler's

attitude to money, heredity, health and possessions, his stoicism, anarchism and "painful devotion to normality."

Mr. Furbank is critical too of Desmond MacCarthy, Hugh Kingsmill and Middleton Murry, seeing their "sympathetic and intelligent criticism" as opening the way for attacks on Butler's reputation. Middleton Murry wrote: "Butler loses almost the last vestige of a title to be considered a creative artist when the astonishing fact is revealed that the letters of Theobald and Christina in 'The Way of all Flesh' are merely reproduced from those which his father and mother sent him." Remembering this, one appreciates the difference in interpretation that enables Mr. Furbank to assert that Butler made "extraordinary artistic use of his own experience."

There is a careful examination of the writings on Evolution, of the cross-purposes of Butler and Darwin, and a summing up of the value of his attacks on the language of scientific discussion: "it is in something of Arnold's manner that Butler displays how the tone of a defensive paragraph or over-qualified sentence may be made to reveal a dishonest intention in an argument."

The latter part of the book is concerned with the "secondary topics" of Butler's relations with Miss Savage—this chapter is an enchanting essay in itself—and with his family, and the psychology of 'Erewhon Revisited.' It concludes with a penetrating comparison of him with Wilde: "A concealed life, a resolute refusal of tragedy by a character naturally inclining to it: such perhaps, in that age, and for that temperament, was the one available alternative to the fatal choice of Wilde."

Mr. Furbank's essay is a valuable and illuminating study of some significant aspects of Samuel Butler.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY. By Oscar Wilde. With Drawings by Michael Aynton. Castle Press, London. Price: 12s. 6d.

To reread 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' is to be reminded of the dichotomy of Oscar Wilde's own separate world: the unrepentant joy in the primrose path with its sound of flutes, and the formidable sensitiveness to the pain that wears no mask.

One can think of the book as a stage where Wilde has three rôles: as the artist ('It is by utterance that we live'), as the spectator, and as the puppet; and if the climax is played to the moralists, one must not forget that the artist had been removed from the stage. Or one can see in the story an ironic dramatization of his point of view. 'The Portrait of Dorian Gray' seems to scintillate as much from its vibrant awareness of morality and convention as from its actual wit. There is a fascination in this concrete demonstration of art for art's sake exposed *à outrance*—though it is possible sometimes to desire that the sequins of Lord Henry Wotton and his disciples be extinguished with the guttering candles on the dinner-table. Paradoxes can wear like platitudes.

There was once a Japanese nobleman who caused a great wall to be built in his garden for the felicity of watching on it the shadows of branches heavy and dark in the sun or tossed in the wind, and the shadows of birds in flight. It is in some such manner that Wilde's best prose achieves its effects. A beauty now become remote, intangible.

It would be a pity to see only the artificiality and the often wilful iconoclasm, or find only escapism in the man who later wrote: "I tremble with pleasure

when I think that on the very day of my leaving prison both the laburnum and the lilac will be blooming in the gardens . . ." and "I had to pass on. The other half of the garden had its secrets for me also." There is still 'the duty of tolerance' to poets—even feverish ones—at a time when literature is weighed in the scales of marxism. And what marxist has dared yet either with levity or curiosity to indicate the consequences of eating all the fruit from the tree of dialectical materialism?

Michael Ayrton's satirical illustrations are a paraphrase that starts with an idealized Wilde and ends with a gargoyles.

A SECOND BOOK OF RUSSIAN VERSE. Edited by C. M. Bowra. Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 10s. 6d.

Professor Bowra, in his introduction to 'A Second Book of Russian Verse,' states that while the versification, forms and themes of Russian poetry are European, its special qualities are due to a combination of the living art of the folk-song and "an uncommon gift for absorbing foreign influence and transforming them to new uses."

A comparison of these translations by various hands with others in prose and verse of the poets represented, enables one to recognize their skill and to feel that as poems in English many of them must fairly parallel the originals. Granted that Pushkin's complex texture of sound and Blok's pattern of dissonances and technical mastery are only to be appreciated in the Russian language, the former's 'Gipsy's Song' and Blok's 'The Twelve' are still notable for their tragic intensity. The melancholy and intellectual Baratynsky's 'Bare Days'; Annensky's 'October Myth,' a subjective pattern of two worlds; the wit of Khodasevich's 'Stanzas'; the vehement Mayakovsky; the mournful sweetness of Esenin, the hooligan poet; the verse of Gumilev, exotic, brooding, radiant; and the memorable imagery of Pasternak—such poems as these show how much we are indebted to Professor Bowra and the other translators for the distinction of this anthology.

POEMS FROM THE PERSIAN. By J. C. E. Bowen. Basil Blackwell. Oxford, Publisher. Price: 10s. 6d.

It has been said that if Rossetti had not by chance picked Omar Khayyam's quatrains out of a publisher's remainder bin, their circulation would never have coursed through the veins of the public as they have done to the present day, as the only widely known example of Persian poetry.

Mr. Bowen has now made an attempt to enlarge our knowledge in the same field, by his English translation of excerpts from eleven mediaeval Persian Poets dating between 935 A.D. and 1500 A.D.

There are fifty pieces in all—comprising verses grave, humourous, gnomic (almost wise cracks) and love lyrics—done into English poetry deftly and elegantly by Mr. Bowen, whose enthusiasm for both Persian and English poetry may be deduced from the introduction which he calls "A Secret History," and which tells in an attractive and easy style the manner in which his interest in the Persian Poets became engaged.

Here is an example of his art which has a modern still-life savour:

“ The tulip’s graceful chalice,
Which God’s own hand hath made
Is filled with glowing wine; it stands
Upon a stem of jade.”

or again, this:

“ My eyes o’erflow for what they most desire
Whereas my heart is spent in passion’s fire;
Both ways afflicted, whither can I turn
In floods I perish or in flames I burn.”

What strikes one about these old Persian poets, most of whom were born before Chaucer, is their modernity. Take this verse, which would be just as apposite in Eire to-day as it was in Shiraz in the 13th century.

“ Live always by your own unflinching toil
Dig deep, and sow good seed; do all you can
To pay the debt you owe your country’s soil
Then you need not depend on any man.”

Looking at the exquisite Persian calligraphy at the head of each poem (which was and is still recognised as a branch of Persian art) the question arises—how far are these translations literal? A clue to the answer appears from the quotation from James Stephens on page iv—“ A translation is never completed until it has become a piece of original verse in the new tongue.” Whatever is the sense of the words “ completed ” and “ original,” the statement very much implies the advice of Horace—

“ Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres.”

At all events, inasmuch as the phrasing of Persian poetry would be to our ears terse and almost staccato, expansion in a translation is almost indispensable in an attempt to enshrine in English poetry the idea contained in the original.

The book is very artistically produced—each page embellished with the Persian calligraphy at the top, and a vignette illustrative of each poem at the side. There is also a very striking frontispiece in brilliant colours executed by a distinguished present day Persian artist. It is certainly an ideal gift book, but it deserves a higher character than this for its literary and educative value. Will it experience the good luck of FitzGerald’s *Rubaiyat*?

O’CONNELL, DAVIS AND THE COLLEGES BILL. By Professor Denis Gwynn. Cork University Press. 3s.

In this pamphlet Dr. Gwynn examines, in the light of private letters now printed from the Smith O’Brien papers, and the relevant printed sources, the estrangement between O’Connell and Young Ireland, which arose from the Education Bill of 1845 which established the Queen’s Colleges, called by O’Connell the “ Godless Colleges Bill.”

The correspondence now printed reinforces the view that there were faults on both sides. O’Connell was impatient of any opposition for, or criticism of, his own views, and the Young Irelanders did not pay sufficient deference to his opinions and to his very great services and to his position in the Irish mind.

Dr. Gwynn, however, approaches this question, which had a great deal to do with the disaster which later overtook the Nation, from the point of view of a Catholic rather than that of a Nationalist, and the general tone of his pamphlet is to exalt O'Connell at the expense of Davis. It is suggested that Davis was unduly apprehensive in his fears of a Nation which should be Catholic rather than National. But was he? Did not the new educational policy of the Church divide Catholic and Protestant, and does it not still do so? And is not one of the most regrettable growths of the last twenty years the growth of aggressive Catholic opinion and the increasing activity of small, vocal, fanatical groups of bigots? Is there not a growing tendency to tolerate non-Catholics rather than to accept them as "neighbours" and "mankind" in the sense of the Catechism?

In 1825 there was a House of Lords Committee taking evidence about the state of Ireland. The Rev. James Magauran, D.D., Bishop of Ardagh, gave evidence as follows:—

To what school did you send your nephew? To Mr. Edgeworth's school in the county of Longford.

Your resolution led you to send him to a school kept under the direction of a Protestant gentleman in preference to a school kept by the Jesuits? I considered it a fit school, and it was convenient.

Are there any religious distinctions of any kind in the school which is kept under the superintendence of Mr. Edgeworth? Not the slightest.

Is it attended indifferently by Protestants and Catholics? By Protestants and Catholics; in fact, the words Protestant and Catholic are not only not mentioned, but I think, except for the division that takes place on Sundays, they do not know what religion the others are of.

How many young men are there in that establishment? Two hundred and fifty or thereabouts, so far as I have a recollection.

Does not this arise out of regulations that Mr. Edgeworth has there adopted, and which totally prevent the possibility of any spirit of proselytism being manifested?

I think it is altogether his own regulation; and such was my approbation of that school, in contradistinction to proselytising schools, that I sent my nephew there, to sanction the one in contradistinction to the other.

Is any religious instruction given at that school? On two days in the week the catechism is taught, in one part of the building, to the Protestants, and in the other part of the building, to the Catholics; and on the Sunday evening, when the one comes from the Church, and the other from the Chapel, they assemble for instruction.

The great J. K. L., perhaps the greatest of modern Irish ecclesiastics, also gave evidence before this committee:—

Do you consider it desirable that the Roman Catholic laity should be educated conjointly with the Protestant?

I see no objection whatever that they should be educated together; on the contrary, if by being educated together the harmony of the different sects in Ireland could be promoted, I think it would be a matter to be desired.

If they were so educated together at Trinity College, Dublin, must they not have separate professors of their own Faith to instruct the young men ?

That would not be necessary for those who attend College, as many of those who enter there can lodge in town, and receive religious instruction where they please; and even those who reside within Trinity College have sufficient opportunities of obtaining religious instruction abroad on Sundays.

In point of fact, are there not now some Roman Catholic students in Trinity College, Dublin ?

I apprehend some hundreds of them. The Roman Catholics in Trinity College are not obliged to attend Prayers with others, and of course they would resort to the Prayers of their Church, at least on Sundays. On other days of the week they might perform their Devotions in their chambers.

Oh, no ! Davis was young, and the young are seldom discreet. He may have been over-anxious to prevent a separation which he felt to be looming up and which he knew to be inimical to the Nation. But he was right then, and he is right today.

P. S. O'HEGARTY.

THE BOOK OF DUBLIN. By Eric Whelpton. London: Rockliff Publishing Corporation, Ltd. 15s. net.

This account of a holiday in Dublin is well written for other holiday makers whom the author would encourage to follow in his itinerary. The book is, as the dust-jacket tells us, one that strangers will enjoy; and it is one from which Dubliners will get a few smiles and a meed of pride from the compliments which the author has paid to us. It is a pity that the proofs were not read by some local student of civic history and topography and the biographies of the notabilities mentioned in the text; for, without more corrections and revisions than those suggested here, this well-printed and finely produced work can not be recommended as a guide which is directly or informatively accurate.

' Carolan, last of the Irish bards . . . His real name was Philpot Curran.' (p. 21). Alas, Golden Orator ! ' She (Stella) was sufficiently attractive to be wooed by many other men ' (p. 22). There is no more validity for that suggestive passage than there is for the senseless, cruel assumption that ' it seems likely that she (Vanessa) became his (Swift's) mistress.' (p. 126). Touchingly, almost poetically, Mr. Whelpton constructs 'the last closing scene in the deanery,' which, he says in page 127, ' is a large gloomy house near by St. Patrick's Cathedral.' The fact is that the deanery house wherein Swift lived and died was burned in the year 1781, and nothing of it remains visible.

A surprising paragraph in page 71 is too lengthy to quote here, but for the sake of accuracy it must be noted that situation of the Grammar School was in Johnston's Court. R. B. Sheridan *was* educated there, but he never went to Westminster School, nor to Trinity College, and he took no university degree. Contrary to Mr. Whelpton's belief, there is no doubt as to where Brinsley's stage career began; it was at Covent Garden Theatre, when *The Rivals* was produced, in 1775. He never managed the Smock Alley Theatre, but his father, Thomas, did.

The 1st Duke of Marlborough, not his grandfather, was first educated at the Free School of Dublin (p. 23). 'Gresham Street is full of movement . . . ' (p. 25); but there is no street of that name in Dublin. For 'Cork Street' (p. 30) read 'Cork Hill'—the street of that name is in another locality. 'The Record Tower where Emmet and Lord Edward Fitzgerald were imprisoned' (p. 31); Emmet and Lord Edward were in Newgate. Birmingham's Tower was the Castle prison, but not after rebuilding in 1775. The date of the Union was 1800, not 1862 (p. 35). The statue on the Custom House dome is Hope, not Justice (p. 52). The sculptor mentioned in page 52 was Edward Smyth, not F. E. Smyth. The original name of Sackville Street, now O'Connell Street, was Drogheda Street—the Mall was in the centre of it (p. 54).

The Royal Hospital was constructed by Sir William Robinson, after the model by Wren (p. 59). The 'church that brings life to Mount street' is St. Stephen's, not St. Paul's (p. 62). The 'curious Eastern mosque in Fenian Street' (p. 63) is in Lincoln Place; it was Dublin's first Turkish Baths. There never was a polo ground in the Zoological Gardens (p. 130); and there has been no 'magnificent Blue Coat School in Queen street' (p. 57) since the year 1778—Thomas Ivory's building, the King's Hospital School, is on Oxmantown Green, Blackhall street.

J. H.

THE DUBLIN CITY CHURCHES OF THE CHURCH OF IRELAND. By H. A. Wheeler and M. J. Craig. Dublin: A.P.C.K. 5s. net.

In this praiseworthy handbook, which is a timely and welcome addition to the literature on our city, the authors have succeeded in gathering within sixty pages a remarkably comprehensive account of all the parish churches within the Circular roads of Dublin, and they give interesting, abridged records of those which have disappeared. The only omissions are the existing St. Kevin's (which probably is considered to be outside the areas dealt with) and the almost forgotten Huguenot churches. Non-parochial churches and chapels—the Rotunda, Trinity College, the Royal Hospital and others—are dealt with in an Appendix. It is evident that the subject-matter is the result of diligent study of the most reliable authorities, and of much time given gladly to the inspection and description of old and beautiful interiors. A short bibliography gives the most important sources of information; and there are twenty-two illustrations from photographs and old prints. This is a work which has been long waiting to be done, and Messrs. Wheeler and Craig have done it well.

J. R. H.

MENTAL ABNORMALITY. By Millais Culpin, M.D., F.R.C.S. Hutchinson's University Series. Price 7s. 6d.

In the past 50 years since Freud first published his papers on psycho-analysis, Psychiatry has come to occupy an increasing place in current thought, and although many of his ideas have been much modified by later workers the basic conception is now generally accepted. In modern literature, drama, poetry and films there is unmistakable evidence of this. The neurotic, or the frank psychotic, furnish the subject of all too many such studies, and often it is obvious that the author or producer has only a superficial knowledge of the subject, or of the meaning of many of the terms employed. This small book

by a well-known specialist, formerly Professor of Industrial Psychology in the University of London, should serve as a useful introduction to Psychiatry for the lay reader. It is written from the viewpoint of Freudian psycho-analysis, and in brief compass surveys the various theories of mental disorder and such subjects as anxiety, obsessions, dissociation, the psychopathology of sex, mental deficiency and some of the commoner psychoses. It includes some interesting case-histories, mostly of psychoneurotics, and is written in simple language, and has a short glossary of terms employed, and a list of books for further study. Dr. Culpin pins his faith to psycho-analysis as the best means to 'Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff which weighs upon the heart,' and so help the patient to 'minister to himself.' Most physicians, however, find that the old method of deep analysis is too slow for these busy days, and resort to more modern methods of narco-analysis, or the simpler methods of explanation and persuasion. The study of the make-up of Adolf Hitler is interesting, though many will dissent from Dr. Culpin's diagnosis of hypomania. He was almost certainly a paranoiac.

W. S.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MODERN PROSODY. By Karl Shapiro. Johns Hopkins. University Press. London. Geoffrey Cumberlege. Price: 10s. 6d.

The aim of this compilation, made by Mr. Shapiro as Consultant in Poetry in English, The Library of Congress, is to show that from the two major traditions of stress and temporal prosody has sprung a third, mixed prosody, which 'is to all appearances a conjunction of the other two.' The plan followed has been, in the main, to select 'a fair sample of works representative of new tendencies in prosodic scholarship and science.' The annotations are admirable and relate the work of the discussed English and American prosodists to one of the three traditions of English metrics.

Mr. Shapiro refers to the interminable and scarcely touched 'Library of Congress collections in scholarly and other periodicals'; and to the examination that a comprehensive bibliography would demand of work 'in the applied sciences and arts of esthetics, poetics, acoustics, literary criticism, philology, and music'; but most students of the structures of metre in poetry and prose will find this a sufficiently thorough compilation of 20th century prosodic studies. An excellent glossary is appended.

THE PILLAR OF CLOUD. By Francis Stuart. Victor Gollancz. Price 9s. 6d.

The Pillar of Cloud is a deeply moving novel about a group of people in a partially-devastated town in the French zone of Germany. Still tormented by cold and hunger, insecure, always on the defensive, distrusting all uniforms, and with the nightmare of men hunting each other down, they grope their way to new values, a deeper understanding of integrity and fraternity.

Dominic, the Irishman, and the two German sisters who cannot remember undamaged and brightly-lit streets, the elderly aristocratic woman who "could not grasp that all the walls, protective, shutting out the night and chaos, had fallen," the French anarchist with his ideals and kindness: these and the other characters are brilliantly portrayed. Even the occasional sensual crudeness seems an inevitable instrument of this search for meaning in their misery. And the revelation is there: "People who only experienced the war as air-raids or

soldiers who only experienced it as a battlefield were never really touched by it and changed by it in their inmost beings. Those who looked into its visage were those in the prisons and concentration camps." Out of the deepest loneliness and despair comes the realization that a new peace can be shaped only from such suffering.

This revelation is a simple one. "Outside were the ruins, the hunger, the suspicion and hopelessness, but in their room high up above the streets there was another mode of living. All was new, intense and tender. The simplest things were like small, living flames in the old, faded light of day. Eating their meagre food together at the small table, sitting there on the couch at the table in the midst of the long, quiet hours, each time that was like a little ceremony, a celebration of their communion." There is an acceptance of imprisonment, pain, humiliation and death that recalls Pushkin's lines:

Lie still on the day of pain,

And the day of joy will greet you.

and life itself is understood as communion, as a "non-demanding and gentle fraternity."

Mr. Stuart's book is a sensitive and remarkable study of the physical, mental and spiritual effect of war on individuals; and its strange serenity is rooted in the intensity of pain and despair of the "innocent who have suffered without guilt."

HALCYON. By Pierre Herbart. Translated from the French by Agnes Mackay.

John Lehmann. Price: 10s. 6d.

This is an exquisite piece of writing, finely translated, but so delicately allusive that no outline could do it justice. The first part recounts the escape of the boy, Fabian, from a reformatory to a desert island which, it soon appears, contains the ruins of another boys' reformatory, abandoned after a revolt. The narrator, a boy who accompanies him, finds himself groping after hidden meanings in their existence; and in a suddenly-observed detail of Fabian's appearance, and in their running away from an old man on the island—an ex-gaoler haunted by having shot one of the rebels—he is vaguely aware of events beyond the present. His uneasiness grows. "The summer had lost its glory. I fancied there was a flaw, a secret deterioration in everything. And yet, I remember, at the end of August, sweltering days burning like a great fire, a fire that even night could not quench. The flaw was probably within myself." And the flaw causes him to leave the island and return to the world that destroys that of the imagination.

Fabian is now alone with the old man; and there follows what might be described as a musical pattern: the theme of Fabian's communion with the spirit of Marceau, the murdered boy, till they become as one; the theme of the old man's penance in that, despite his grief, he must always relive the past; the subtle variations and echoes; and the almost unbearable restatement when the two themes are seen to be one inevitable design: "The guardian shouldered his gun. In full flight, Fabian doubled up, rolled over, but managed to get up again. A song of victory swelled up within him, grew louder. Already the sea was round his feet. He fell full length in the water and began to swim, to swim."

The last part—where the old man is in a hospice for the aged—returns in a minor key to his tragedy. He is feebly helping the gardener's lad, who stands

watching him. "The old man's face wore an expression of bewildered anxiety. And in a colourless voice he murmured:

'Marceau, my little pigeon, is it you?'

The child, disconcerted, looked for a shadow at his side.

'I am not Marceau,' he said."

The title is taken from a passage by Montaigne: "... But Gods decree hath been, that all the watrerie wilderness should be quiet and made calm, without raine, wind, or tempest, during the time the Halcyon sitteth and bringeth forth her young-ones . . . By whose privilege even in the hart and deadeest time of Winter we have seven calme daies, and as many nights to saile without any danger."—which suggests the little calm that Fabian found between his harsh childhood and violent end; and also, one likes to think, his final enduring peace.

The illustrations by John Harrison are sensitively conscious of their text.

THE CONFIDENCE-MAN. His Masquerade. By Herman Melville. With an Introduction by Roy Fuller. The Chiltern Library. John Lehmann. Price: 8s. 6d.

It was once said of Meredith that "now and again he visibly bursts all the boundaries of legitimate story-telling and rolls in the pasture of the essay, criticism, comedy, and farce." Something of the sort could be said of Melville in 'The Confidence-Man,' save that it is disconcerting to see with how wry a face he rolls.

Mr. Fuller in his introduction is most persuasive about the qualities of the book—even to the dangling of the bait that the inexplicitness of the plot is like that of Kafka. "It is like Kafka and unlike Stevenson, too, in that although the idea of its plot is ingenious there is hardly any attempt to exploit it for the sake of entertainment or neatness. It is steadfastly used for Melville's moral purpose." There is an undeniable attraction about it, not the least part being how the effect of the deaf mute, whose brief appearance at the beginning had so excited the crowd on the river steamer, persists till the end page where the confidence-man leads his last victim away in the darkness. The clue to this sensation as of a gigantic dumb show—despite the lamentations of the miser, the smooth interminable rhetoric of the confidence-man, the response of rogues and fools—lies, perhaps, in Mr. Fuller's analysis:

"Melville was a master at communicating the appearance of things"—for example, the miser: 'His eyes were closed, his cheek lay upon an old white moleskin coat, rolled under his head, like a wizened apple upon a grimy snow-bank.'

"The most striking thing about 'The Confidence-Man' is that its moral judgments take place outside it."

"Melville uses only three moral types—first, complete rogues; secondly, those whom the rogues can dupe; thirdly, those whom the rogues cannot dupe. All these types are presented exclusively from the outside."

The whole extraordinary scene of foreigners, fine ladies, speculators, philosophers, bucks, traders, jesters, mourners and grinning negroes passes as if in a vivid but ugly dream. And like the sound of the river slides past much of the prose: "Analogically, he couples the slanting cut of the equivocator's coat-tails with the sinister cast in his eye; he weighs slyboot's sleek speech in the light imparted

by the oblique import of the smooth slope of his worn boot-heels; the insinuator's undulating flunkeyisms dovetail into those of the flunkey beast that windeth his way on his belly."

Mr. Fuller has two conclusions: "There is a power, a control, a vision, a singular intelligence, behind 'The Confidence-Man': we can never at any time during its course proclaim it a great novel, but we can never forget that its author was a great novelist" and it is "a novel really neither sensible nor successful." Most readers will probably be aware of a like fascinated frustration.

THE WIND AND THE RAIN. Autumn, 1948. Vol. V. No. 2. Quarterly, 2s.

In this issue, Neville Braybrooke has salutary things to say about some contemporary critics, and maintains that criticism is "a creative act because in its achievement it is necessary to call upon the full experience of life, and not merely literary experience." As editor, his strictures have added justification. The review of the poetry of Lilian Bowes Lyon is a fine example of the discriminating and able criticism that one expects from *The Wind and The Rain*.

The article by E. F. Caldin on 'Beauty and Science' is taken from his forthcoming book on the scope and method of science, and is a consideration of the intellectual beauty that belongs to Science. D. J. B. Hawkins discusses the need for a revival of a genuinely empirical approach to philosophy, "an empiricism which does justice to the whole of experience, an empirical approach to metaphysics and a consequent renewal of metaphysical thinking upon more completely explored epistemological foundations." 'The Re-Discovery of *Paradise Lost*,' by J. C. Maxwell, is a careful survey of recent critical studies of the poem. There are poems by, among others, Richard Church and Henry Treece, and translations by Harold Morland, of Arabic-Andalusian Casidas, some slight sketches, and a delightfully entertaining and clever Note on Upton Sinclair by S. Gorley Putt.

ISS. REVIEW. Illustrated. Autumn, 1948. 6d.

The *Review* of the International Student Service reflects the aim of the Association to be "a common platform on which members of all races, religions and creeds can meet in a search for truth and friendship," and "the channel through which, in time of stress, material needs are met."

In the present number, J. Mackay-Mure discusses the primary function of the universities and their relation to society; Professor E. Ashby contrasts Soviet students with those of western and Chinese universities; Sir Arthur Salter in an admirable article considers "in what sense, and to what extent, are the roots of war to be found in economic conditions? What is the relation between economic and political factors as the causes of war? What are the economic policies and systems that are most favourable to peace?" There is an interesting description by Neville Braybrooke of a summer Seminar at Salzburg, 1948; and B. Brooke writes on 'Britain's Contribution to Opera.' In addition, there are book reviews, and information about conditions for students in different countries.

The *ISS. Review* merits the attention of everyone who values university traditions, and who realises the magnitude of the problems, economic and cultural, facing students all over the world.

INTERIM. Vol. III. No. 1. 40 cents.

This is another of the type of American magazine that announces high cultural ideals and sensitive appreciation of the best in contemporary literature, and that praises its contributors as heartily as manufacturers advertise their canned foods. With a proper respect one opens *Interim*. Apart from an able criticism of two recent books on Blake, there is little but the complacent, slick and embarrassingly trivial. The verse preens itself with this sort of thing: "chorus like virus filtering to the stage," "mechanic in the mailed mind/holding a delicate hat pin balance"; while the short stories, it would appear, are concerned with morons.

THE COOK'S PARADISE. Edited by R. L. Mégroz. Sylvan Press. 7/6.

Here's richness! The "Complete System of Cookery" is that of William Verral, mine host of The White Hart Inn, at Lewes, and devoted pupil of Monsieur Clouet, chef to the Duke of Newcastle and later steward to Richelieu. Although describing himself as 'a poor publican,' Verral wrote the clear vivid prose of his age. Mr. Mégroz, therefore, in giving us a manuscript lost for two centuries, offers us food both for mind and body. Especially since, together with Verral's quaint, crisp writings, we have holograph cookery notes by Thomas Gray; the poet having also discovered Verral and having made annotations with gusto!

In these days of austerity a primitive sense of sheer 'survival' dictates that citizens should get all the 'tips' possible about food and what can be done with it. This book is, therefore, much more than a gourmet's somewhat nostalgic glimpse of French elegance entering the old English kitchen; there are most practical hints for preparing dishes, succulent but readily available. Verral deals on one page with dishes ordered better in France and lavishly cooked in a Rhenish wine or in champagne; but he is not above a simple English "Hodgepodge of beef with savoy's"; and he is learned in the cunning use of herbs, and in preparation of vegetables, including endives, apparently better known then than nowadays. Here then is meat for historian and belletrist, for the 'displaced person,' turning rather desperately to cookery, and for the more expert, hankering for things off the Beeton track.

M. C.

Obituary

GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

THE recent death of DR. GORDON BOTTOMLEY, after a brief illness, came as a shock to his friends in this country, even though he had reached the age of seventy-four. During most of his life he had been an invalid, for he suffered from an affection of the lungs; but such was his vitality and imaginative zest that he overcame grave disability for long periods. A few years ago he contributed a play and an article to this Magazine, but his interest in Irish letters went back very far. He was born in Yorkshire, but his mother was Scottish: there was nothing phlegmatic in his temperament, for he was eager and quick of mind and in conversation. He was always ready to acknowledge, with enthusiasm, the debt which he owed to the Irish literary revival. At an

early age he discovered for himself the imaginative power of words in the prose of Oscar Wilde, and there is almost excessive richness in his first poems and dramatic pieces, such as *The Gate of Smaragdus* and *A Vision of Giorgione*. But it was the early dramatic experiments of W. B. Yeats and others which confirmed his interest in poetic drama: *The Crier by Night*, published in 1902, combines, with some incongruity, the delicacy of the Celtic Twilight mood with the powerful imaginative realism which he was to develop later. However, it was by the publication of *King Lear's Wife* in the first Georgian Anthology, edited by Edward Marsh, that the poet-dramatist came into prominence. With much daring, he took a theme of Shakespeare's and, in a stark powerful drama in one act, broke down the dead literary convention of English Victorian verse drama—the imitation Shakespearean verse drama complete in five acts. Later came *Gruach*, an imaginative study of Lady Macbeth as a young impetuous girl, and with much ingenuity, the poet devised a dramatic meeting between her and Macbeth, envoy of Duncan, King of Scotland.

Owing to his preoccupation with verse-drama, the poetry of Gordon Bottomley has been neglected, but his delicate lyrical gift will be found in *Poems of Thirty Years*, published in 1925. Here are a few lines from *Eager Spring*:—

Whirl, snow, in the blackbird's chatter;
 You will not hinder his song to come.
 East wind, Sleepless, you cannot scatter
 Quince-bud, almond-bud,
 Little grape-hyacinth's
 Clustering brood,
 Nor unfurl the tips of the plum.
 No half born stalk of a lily stops;
 There is sap in the storm-torn bush;
 And, ruffled by gusts in a snow-blurred copse,
 "Pity to wait," sings a thrush.

For many years Gordon Bottomley took an active part in the annual Oxford Festival of Spoken Poetry and helped to organise verse-speaking groups in Scotland. Though he never had a theatre of his own, like Yeats, he had an unerring instinct as a dramatist. His later experiments were more practical than those of Yeats, for, realising the advantage of having actors trained in rhythmic speech, he explored the new possibilities of modern verse drama—the use of chorus and narration. For all his later plays he drew his themes from Scottish history and folklore, finding exciting plots in quaint local books. Among his later publications were *Lyric Plays*, 1932; *The White Widow*, a play about Mary Queen of Scots, 1936; *Choric Plays*, 1939; *Deirdre*, 1942, a play for translation into Gaelic; and *Kate Kennedy*, a delightful comedy of mediaeval University life in Scotland, 1945. *Gulban Sands* has been performed here several times by small groups; *The Bower of Wandel* and *King Lear's Wife* were first performed in this country by the Dublin Verse Speaking Society at the Peacock Theatre. Many of the limited editions published by Gordon Bottomley are attractive in format and are sought after by book collectors.

AUSTIN CLARKE.